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# A CHURCH HISTORY.

# A
# CHURCH HISTORY
OF THE
# First Seven Centuries
TO THE CLOSE OF THE
# SIXTH GENERAL COUNCIL

BY

MILO MAHAN, D.D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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IN THE GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, NEW YORK

*FIFTH EDITION*

NEW YORK
E. & J. B. YOUNG & CO.
7 AND 9 WEST 18TH STREET

[c1900]

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTH EDITION

It is with much pleasure I respond to the request of the publishers to introduce to the public a popular edition of Dr. Mahan's History of the first seven Centuries of the Christian Church. The book when first issued from the press, some thirty years ago, was welcomed in England as a much-needed addition to our Church Literature. It has for twenty years been my own text-book in the General Theological Seminary; I have never been able to find any work of a like kind to take its place. The intelligent lay reader, as well as the candidate for Holy Orders, will find here a well-written and profound discussion of the subject with which it deals. There are passages which for charm and felicity of expression are not to be surpassed in the English tongue, while the interest of the thoughtful reader is sustained throughout.

THOMAS RICHEY,

*Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the General Theological Seminary, New York.*

October 3, 1900.

# AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The following History is intended chiefly for the use of the general reader; with a view to whom, results are given rather than learned disquisitions, and the references are made as far as possible to authorities easily accessible.

It is hoped that it will also be found a help to young students and candidates for Holy Orders. In the case of such, however, it is taken for granted that Eusebius is close at hand; and at least one good text-book such as Gieseler's Church History, which, especially as arranged in Smith's American Edition, is invaluable for its exact and copious citations, and for its excellent bibliographical apparatus. Its principal defect is one incidental to all text-books; namely, that it *anatomizes* the body of Church History to the prejudice of its life,—giving an aggregation of facts nicely arranged and labelled, instead of that living flow of events in their natural order by which (according to the maxim, *solvitur ambulando*) history explains and justifies itself. It is hoped that the present volume, by following as far as possible the narrative form, and by distinguishing the development of Church life in individuals, in Schools, and finally in the great Provincial Churches, will help to supply this deficiency, and facilitate the profoundly interesting and comprehensive study to which it is offered as an humble contribution.

The author's obligations to the innumerable laborers who have preceded him in this field it would be only tedious to express. As Dr. Schaff, however, is one of the most recent among these, and is sometimes referred to in this volume with expressions of dissent from his opinions, it seems but just to bear witness to the high merits of his two admirable and learned works, as presenting some of the best results of modern German criticism in a form quite intelligible to the English reader.

To those who understand what Church History is, no apology is needed for a new work on the subject. The narrative of the three years of the Ministry of our Lord required four men, four minds, and four different points of view to do justice to it, though written under the guidance of an infallible Inspiration. Much more is there room for many men, many minds, and many different points of view, in a subject which covers all time, and in dealing with which no sort of infallibility can be decently laid claim to. No one book can pretend to be a History in the full sense of the word. The best effort, like the worst, is merely a History *according to* this man or that, according to one bias or another;—as a general rule, the worst bias being that which makes the loudest professions of being free from bias. The following work claims nothing on that score. It is written, however, according to the best judgment and best intentions of the author, with a sincere effort to state facts as they have come down to us from antiquity; and as such is commended to the kind indulgence of the charitable reader.

General Theological Seminary,
New York, *April* 5, 1860.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

N.B.—The Bishops of Rome *Italics;* of Jerusalem (J); of Alexandria (A); of Antioch (An); Martyrs are distinguished by a †.

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| Tiberius. 33 S. Stephen.† | 30 | 33 Church in Jerusalem. |
| 35 James (J). | | *Persecution—Dispersion.* |
| | | Gospel preached in Samaria, |
| 37 Caligula. | | Cæsarea, Cyprus, Phenice. |
| The Twelve in | | (Simon Magus.) |
| 41 Claudius. Palestine. | 40 | 44 Herod Agrippa dies. |
| | | 45 Church in Antioch. |
| 45 S. James the | | 46 Claudius expels the Jews |
| Greater.† | | from Rome. |
| Barnabas, | 50 | 50 Council in Jerusalem. |
| 54 Nero. Paul, | | Church Centres established in |
| Silas, and others. | | Alexandria, Corinth, Ephesus, |
| *Linus.* 62 S. James the Just.† | | Rome—(Judaizing teachers |
| *Cletus.* 63 Symeon (J). | 60 | and Gnostics in Asia Minor, |
| *Clemens.* S. Peter,† Anianus (A), | | Parties in Corinth, etc.) |
| and S. Paul.† | | 64 First Persecution. |
| Euodius, } (An). | | |
| 68 Galba. Ignatius, | | |
| 69 Otho. | | |
| 69 Vitellius. | 70 | Destruction of Jerusalem. |
| 69 Vespasian. | | |
| 71 S. Thomas.† | | Seven Churches of Asia, each |
| 73 S. Bartholomew.† | | with its Angel or Bishop. |
| 79 Titus. | 80 | |
| 81 Domitian. | | (Nicolaitans, Docetæ, Cerinthus, |
| 85 Avilius (A). | | Menander.) |
| *Anacletus?* 95 Antipas.† | 90 | Second Persecution. |
| *Evaristus?* | | |
| 98 Nerva. 98 Cerdo (A). | | Nerva forbids accusations of |
| S. John, } † | | slaves against their masters. |
| 99 Trajan. S. Clement. | 100 | Edict against secret societies. |
| Justus (J). | | |
| S. Polycarp fl. | 110 | Third Persecution. |
| 117 S. Ignatius.† | | Correspondence between Pliny |
| 117 Hadrian. | | and Trajan. |
| 119 *Alexander.* Ammias. | | Insurrections of the Jews in |
| Quadratus. | 120 | Egypt and Cyrene. |
| Aristides. | | |
| Papias. | | Fourth Persecution. |
| 130 *Sixtus I.* | | Bar Cochba's Insurrection. |
| 135 Marcus (J). | 130 | 135 Ælia Capitolina. |
| 138 Antoninus Justin M. fl. | 140 | (Gnostic Sects and Schools.) |
| Pius. | | (Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion.) |
| 140 *Telesphorus.* Hegesippus fl. | 150 | (Montanus.) |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 152 *Hyginus.* | *Pius ?* | 150 | (Paschal Controversy.) |
| 154 *Anicetus.* | | | Polycarp confers with Anicetus. |
| | Athenagoras. | 160 | |
| 161 Marcus Aurelius. | Melito of Sardis.<br>Apollinaris. | | FIFTH PERSECUTION.<br>Synods respecting Easter and Montanism. |
| 173 *Soter.* | | | |
| | S. Polycarp.†<br>S. Pothinus.† | 170 | The Thundering Legion.<br>(Tatian, Bardesanes.) |
| 177 *Eleutherus.* | Dionysius of Corinth fl. | | Persecutions at Lyons and Vienne. Preachers sent to Britain. Commodus favors the Christians. |
| 180 Commodus. | Irenæus fl.<br>Theophilus (An).<br>189 Demetrius (A). | 180 | |
| | Pantænus fl. | | Pantænus goes to India. |
| 192 *Victor.* | Apollonius.† | 190 | |
| 192 Helvius Pertinax. | Clemens fl. | | (Victor excommunicates the Asiatic Churches.) |
| 193 Didius Julianus. | 195 Narcissus (J). | | Several Synods holden.<br>197 Jews and Samaritans rebel and are subdued. |
| 194 Septimius Severus. | Tertullian fl.<br>202 S. Irenæus.† | 200 | |
| 197 *Zephyrinus.* | Origen fl.<br>Minucius Felix fl. | | 202 SIXTH PERSECUTION.<br>*Libelli pacis.* |
| 211 Caracalla. | 212 Alexander (J). | 210 | (Patripassian and Monarchian Heretics.) |
| 217 *Callistus.* | Hippolytus fl. | | |
| 217 Macrinus. | | | Ulpian the lawyer collects all the edicts against Christians, and incites to persecution in Rome. |
| 219 Heliogabalus. | | 220 | |
| 222 *Urbanus* | Julius Africanus fl. | | |
| 222 Alexander Severus. | | 230 | (Sabellius fl.)<br>(New Platonic School, Plotinus.) |
| 230 *Pontianus.* | | | |
| 235 *Anterus.* | | | |
| 236 *Fabianus.* | | | |
| 235 Maximinus Thrax. | Babylas (An). | | 235 SEVENTH PERSECUTION.<br>Synod of Iconium. |
| 237 Gordianus. | Firmilianus fl. | 240 | |
| 238 Pupienus. Balbinus. | | | (Origen converts Beryllus.) |
| 244 Philippus Arabs. | | | Church in Numidia and Mauritania. |
| 249 Decius. Trajanus. | *Fabianus.*†<br>Cyprian fl. | 250 | 249 EIGHTH PERSECUTION.<br>Development of Discipline. War, Pestilence, Famine. |
| 251 *Cornelius.*† | Greg. Thaumat. | | |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| 252 *Lucius*.† Dionysius (A). | 252 | |
| 252 Gallus and Volusianus. | | Goths overrun Asia Minor and |
| 253 *Stephen*.† (Novatianus.) | | Greece—Christian captives |
| 254 Valerianus. 257 Cyprian.† | | preach the Gospel. |
| 257 *Sixtus II*.† | | (Baptismal Controversy.) |
| 259 Gallienus. (Nepos.) | | 257 NINTH PERSECUTION. |
| 259 *Dionysius*. | 260 | Valerian taken prisoner by the |
| | | Persians. |
| 268 Claudius II. | | (Sabellian Controversy in Pentapolis.) |
| | | |
| 269 *Felix*. Paul,<br>270 Aurelian. Domnus, (An). | 270 | (Three COUNCILS OF ANTIOCH<br>—Paul condemned.) |
| 275 Tacitus. S. Antony. | | Edict of Persecution—Aurelian |
| 275 *Eutychianus*. | | slain. |
| 276 Florianus Methodius of | 280 | Porphyry writes against the |
| Probus. Tyre. | | Christians. |
| 282 Carus. | | |
| 283 *Caius*. Lucian the M. | | |
| 284 Diocletian. | | Peace and prosperity of the |
| (Era of the Martyrs.) | | Church. Splendor of |
| Pamphilus of Cæsarea. | 290 | Church buildings. |
| 287 D. and Maximian. | | |
| 294 (Constantius | | |
| and Galerius.) | | Hierocles opposes Christianity. |
| 296 *Marcellinus*. Eusebius the | 300 | 303 Edict of Persecution—destruction of the Churches. |
| Ch. Hist'n. | | |
| (Meletius.) | | TENTH PERSECUTION. |
| 308 *Marcellus*. (Arius.) | | 305 (Council of Elvira.) |
| 308 Maximin. | | 309 Martyrs of Palestine. |
| Cæcilianus. | | |
| 310 *Eusebius*. (Donatus.) | 310 | 311 Death of Galerius and |
| *Melchiades*. Peter (A).† | | Edict of toleration. |
| | | 312 Victory of Constantine. |
| 314 *Sylvester*. | | (Donatist troubles.) |
| Alexander (A). | | 313 Victory of Licinius. |
| Hosius. | 320 | Edicts of restitution. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| Lactantius fl. | 320 | 318–320 Arius proclaims his Heresy. |
| | | 321 Arius condemned in Alexandria. |
| 323 Constantine sole Emperor. | | 325 COUNCIL OF NICÆA (1*st General*). |
| 326 S. Athanasius, Bp. of Alexandria. | | 326 Death of Crispus and Fausta.<br>S. Helena's Pilgrimage. |
| Juvencus fl. | 330 | New Rome dedicated. |
| | | 331 Arius recalled.<br>Schism in Antioch. |
| | | 335 Councils of Tyre and Jerusalem. |
| 336 *Mark.* | | 336 First expulsion of Athanasius. |
| Maximus (J). | | Sudden death of Arius. |
| 337 *Julius.* | | 337 Division of the Empire. |
| 337 Constantine II.<br>Constans.<br>Constantius. | | |
| | 340 | Death of Constantine II. |
| | | 341 Second expulsion of Athanasius.<br>Monachism appears in the West.<br>Council of the *Dominicum Aureum.* |
| S. Cyril, Bp. of Jerusalem, fl. | | 345 Revolt of the Donatists.<br>347 Council of Sardica.<br>349 Restoration of Athanasius.<br>Donatists subdued. |
| S. Hilary, Bp. of Poitiers. | 350 | Murder of Constans.<br>351 Council of Sirmium.<br>Persecution renewed. |
| 352 *Liberius.*<br>353 Constantius sole Emperor. | | 353–355 Councils of Arles and Milan.<br>356 Third Expulsion of Athanasius.<br>358 Council of Ancyra.<br>359 Council of Seleucia.<br>Council of Ariminum. |
| | 360 | S. Basil's Monks in Pontus.<br>Ulfilas, Apostle of the Goths. |
| 361 Julian. 361 Meletius (An). | | 361 Council of Antioch.<br>Paganism restored by Julian. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| 362 S. Dionysius, the Areopagite (so called). | 362 | 362 Outbreak at Antioch.<br>Council at Alexandria.<br>Fourth expulsion of Athanasius. |
| 363 Jovian. | | 363 Attempt to rebuild the Temple.<br>Death of Julian.<br>Christianity restored. |
| 364 Valentinian I.<br>Valens. | | 364 Final division of the Empire.<br>General restoration of Orthodoxy. |
| 366 *Damasus.*<br>S. Jerome fl.<br>368 S. Epiphanius fl.<br>S. Optatus fl. | | 367 Valens, Arian persecutor. |
| S. Basil the Great, Bp. of Cæsarea in Cappadocia.<br>S. Gregory, Nazianzen fl.<br>S. Gregory Nyssen fl.<br>S. Ephraim Syrus fl.<br>Pacian fl.<br>371 S. Martin, Bp. of Tours. | 370 | Fifth expulsion of Athanasius.<br>Clergy restrained by law. |
| Macarius fl. | | 373 Athanasius dies. |
| 375 Gratian.<br>Valentinian II.<br>379 Theodosius. | | 377–382 Gothic invasion.<br>378 S. Gregory Nazianzen at Constantinople. |
| Philostorgius fl.<br>Macrobius fl. | 380 | 381 First Council of Constantinople (*2d General*). |
| 384 *Siricius.* Symmachus fl.<br>385 Theophilus, Bp. (A).<br>Idacius fl. | | 383 Rome becomes Christian.<br>Conference of Sects.<br>Heresies forbidden.<br>385 Execution of Priscillianists.<br>385–6 Contest for the Basilicas at Milan. |
| 387 Gaudentius fl. | | 387 The Serapeum destroyed.<br>388 Theodosius sent out of the Chancel. |
| Paulinus of Nola. | 390 | Sedition and Massacre at Thessalonica |
| 395 Arcadius.<br>Honorius.<br>395 S. Augustine, Bp. of Hippo. | | 391–4 Pagan religion prohibited.<br>395 S. Symeon Stylites.<br>396 Alaric invades Greece. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| 398 *Anastasius.* S. Chrysostom, Bp. of Constantinople. | 398 | |
| 401 Palladius.<br>402 *Innocent.*<br>405 Prudentius fl.<br>407 Theodosius II. | 400 | Alaric invades Italy.<br>404 Gladiators abolished at Rome.<br>S. Chrysostom exiled.<br>406 Defeat of Radagaisius.<br>407 Death of S. Chrysostom.<br>408 Disgrace and death of Stilicho.<br>Alaric's 1st siege of Rome.<br>409 Alaric's 2d siege of Rome.<br>Spain invaded by Vandals, etc. |
| Synesius fl.<br>412 S. Cyril (A).<br>S. Isidore of Pelusium fl.<br>416 Orosius fl.<br>417 *Zosimus.*<br>419 *Boniface.* | 410 | Alaric's capture and sack of Rome.<br>Alaric dies.<br>412 Peace with the Goths.<br>415 Quarrel with Orestes.<br>Massacres in Alexandria.<br>Murder of Hypatia. |
| Paulinus of Milan.<br>Euodius.<br>422 *Celestine.* 423 Theodoret, Bp. of Cyrus fl.<br>424 Cassian fl.<br>425 Valentinian III.<br>Philostorgius fl.<br>428 Nestorius, Bp. (C). | 420 | Paganism extinguished.<br>S. Jerome dies.<br>429 Genseric invades Africa. |
| Hilary of Arles fl.<br>Peter Chrysologus fl.<br>Possidius fl.<br>432 *Sixtus III.* S. Patrick in Ireland.<br>432 Sixtus Senensis fl.<br>434 S. Vincent of Lerins fl.<br>Proclus fl.<br>Sedulius fl.<br>439 Socrates fl. | 430 | Siege of Hippo; Death of S. Augustine.<br>Roman Council condemns Nestorius.<br>The Twelve Anathemas.<br>431 COUNCIL OF EPHESUS (*3d General*).<br>432 Cyril and John (An) reconciled.<br>Alienation general in the East.<br>435 Nestorius exiled. |
| 440 *S. Leo the Great.* Sozomen fl.<br>S. Salvian fl. | 440 | 441 The Huns attack Eastern Empire. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| 444 S. Prosper of Aquitain. | 444 | 448 Council at Constantinople. Eutyches condemned. |
| Dioscorus (A).<br>447 Flavianus (C). | | 449 Descent of Saxons in Britain.<br>*Latrocinium*, Robber Council. |
| 450 Marcian. | 450 | |
| 451 Proterius (A). | | 451 COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON (*4th General*).<br>Attila invades Gaul.<br>Battle of Chalons. |
| | | 452 Juvenal flees from Jerusalem.<br>Attila invades Italy.<br>Republic of Venice founded. |
| | | 453 Attila dies. |
| | | 454 Ætius murdered. |
| | | 455 Rome sacked by Vandals. |
| 455 Maximus.<br>Avitus. | | 455–582 Saxons masters of Britain. |
| 457 Majorianus.<br>Leo. | | 457 Proterius murdered.<br>Pilgrimage of Eudocia. |
| Arnobius fl. | 460 | |
| 461 Severus. Ruffinus fl. | | |
| *Hilary.* 461 S. Remigius, Bp. of Rheims. | | 461–7 Ricimer in power. |
| 467 *Simplicius.*<br>Anthemius. | | |
| | 470 | |
| 472 Olybrius. Sidonius fl.<br>Julius Nepos. | | 472 Sack of Rome.<br>Death of Ricimer. |
| 474 Zeno. | | |
| 476 Augustulus. Aulus Gellius fl.<br>Odoacer. | | |
| | 480 | |
| | | 481 Clovis, King of the Franks. |
| | | 482 The *Henoticon* issued. (Thirty-five years' schism between East and West.) |
| 483 *Felix II.* | | |
| | 490 | |
| 491 Anastasius. | | |
| 492 *Gelasius.* | | 493 Theodoric, King of Italy. |
| 494 S. Benedict fl. | | |
| 495 Gennadius fl. | | |
| 496 *Anastasius II.* | | 496 Conversion of Clovis. |
| 498 *Symmachus.* | | |
| Cæsarius of Arles fl. | 500 | Victory of Clovis. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| 507 Fulgentius fl. | | Theodoric persecutes the Catholics. |
| | 510 | |
| 514 *Hormisdas.* Cassiodorus fl. | | 512 *Trisagion* riots in Constantinople. |
| | | 514 First Religious War: Vitalian's rebellion. |
| 518 Justin I. Theodorus Lector fl. | | 516 Authority of Chalcedon restored. |
| 520 Justinian. | 520 | |
| 523 *John.* | | |
| | | 524 Death of Boëthius. |
| 526 *Felix III.* | | 525 Death of Symmachus. |
| 527 Justinian, sole Emperor. Procopius fl. | | 527–33 Reform of Roman Law. |
| | | 529 Monte Cassino founded. |
| 530 *Boniface II.* | 530 | |
| 532 *John II.* | | 532 Sedition of the *Nika* in Constantinople. |
| 533 Dionysius Exiguus fl. | | 533–4 Belisarius reconquers Africa. |
| 535 *Agapetus.* Nicetius fl. | | 535 He subdues Sicily. |
| 536 *Silverius.* | | 536 French monarchy established in Gaul. |
| 537 *Vigilius.* | | 537 The new S. Sophia dedicated. |
| | | 537–9 Belisarius recovers Italy. |
| Facundus fl. | 540 | |
| | | 541 Jacob Baradai. |
| | | 543 S. Benedict dies. |
| | | 546 Rome taken by the Goths. |
| | | 547 Recovered by Belisarius. |
| | | 548 Recall of Belisarius. |
| | | 549 Rome retaken by the Goths. Origen's errors and the Three Chapters. |
| 550 Primasius fl. | 550 | |
| | | 552 Rome recovered by Narses. |
| 553 Liberatus fl. | | 553 SECOND COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (5*th General*). |
| | | 554 Narses defeats the Franks, [etc. |
| 555 *Pelagius.* | | |
| | | 559 Last victory of Belisarius. |
| 560 *John III.* | 560 | |
| Venantius Fortunatus fl. | | 561 Disgrace and Death of Belisarius. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| 565 Justin II. | 565 | 566 Invasion of Lombards and Avars.<br>567 Disaffection and Death of Narses.<br>568–70 Great part of Italy conquered by the Lombards. |
| 574 *Benedict.*<br>578 *Pelagius II.*<br>Tiberius II.<br>579 Leander, Bp. of Seville. | 570 | 574 S. Emilian dies. |
| 581 Gildas fl.<br>582 Maurice. | 580 | Persecution by the Arian Leuvegild.<br>589 King Recared brings Spain to Orthodoxy. |
| 590 *S. Gregory the Great.* Leontius fl.<br>594 Evagrius fl.<br>595 S. Isidore of Seville fl.<br>597 S. Augustine of Canterbury. | 590 | 595–602 Wars against the Avars.<br>Evangelization of the Saxons in Kent. |
| 601 Hesychius fl.<br>602 Phocas. Johannes Malala.<br>604 *Sabinian.*<br>607 *Boniface III.*<br>608 *Boniface IV.* | 600 | Conversion of the Lombards of Italy. |
| 610 Heraclius.<br>615 *Deusdedit.*<br>619 *Boniface V.* | 610 | 619 Council of Seville anathematizes those who disturb or despoil Monasteries. |
| 625 *Honorius.* | 620 | 622–627 Victorious campaigns against the Persians.<br>622 The Hejira.<br>625 50,000 captives liberated.<br>626 Persians and Avars repulsed from Constantinople.<br>628 Peace with Persia; Chosroes dead.<br>629 The True Cross restored to the Holy Sepulchre.<br>Several Provinces recovered. |

| EMPERORS, CHURCH TEACHERS, ETC. | A.D. | AFFAIRS IN CHURCH AND STATE. |
|---|---|---|
| Sophronius (J). | 630 | Edict affirming One Will in Christ. |
| | | 632 Death of Mohammed. The Provinces gained from the Persians lost to the Saracens. |
| | | 637 Saracens take Jerusalem. |
| | | 638 Saracens invade Egypt. |
| | | 639 The *Ecthesis* issued. |
| 640 *Severianus.* Eligius fl. | 640 | |
| *John IV.* | | John IV. rejects the *Ecthesis.* |
| 641 Constantine III. | | 641 Mutilation of Martina and Heracleonas. |
| Heracleonas. | | |
| Constans II. | | |
| 642 *Theodore.* | | 642 Pyrrhus of Constantinople recants his heresy, but recants his recantation. |
| 645 Maximus, Monachus fl. | | |
| | | 647 Saracens take Alexandria. |
| | | 648 The *Typus* issued. |
| 649 *Martin I.* | | |
| S. Columbanus. | 650 | |
| 655 *Eugenius I.* | | Martin of Rome barbarously ill-treated. |
| 657 *Vitalianus.* S. Ildefonso, Abp. of Toledo. | 660 | Origin of the Paulicians. |
| 664 Theodore, Abp. of Canterbury. | | |
| 668 Constantine IV. (Pogonatus.) | | 668–675 Constantinople repeatedly saved from the Saracens by the Greek fire. |
| | 670 | |
| 672 *Adeodatus.* | | |
| 673 Ven. Bede born. | | |
| 676 *Donus.* | | 677 Peace, and Saracens pay tribute. |
| 678 *Agatho.* | | |
| S. Boniface born. | 680 | THIRD COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE (*6th General*). |
| 682 *Leo II.* | | 682 Monothelites exiled to Rome. |
| 684 *Benedict II.* | | Leo II. repeats the anathema on Honorius. |
| 685 *John V.* | | |
| Justinian II. | | Strifes at the election of Popes. |
| 686 *Conon.* | | |
| 687 *Sergius III.* | | |
| | 690 | |
| | | 691 Council in *Trullo*, or Quinisext Council. |

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# BOOK I.

## THE APOSTOLIC AGE,

FROM

JOHN THE BAPTIST

TO

THE SECOND DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

A.D. 30–135.

[The first three *Books* of this *History* are a simple reprint from the first Edition published in 1860, the Author having left no copy with corrections, and the Editor having added only an occasional reference in a foot-note. The fourth and fifth Books, including the account of all the "undisputed General Councils," were left by the Author prepared for the press, having been finished some years before his departure, even to the marginal notes. There has been nothing for the Editor to do, except to continue the *Chronological Table*, and the table of *Contents*, and complete the brief *Appendix*, besides which, he has added a full *Index* to the whole work.—J. H. H. Jr.]

# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH.

## Book I.

### CHAPTER I.

### THE ORGANIZATION.

*John the Forerunner.*

THE history of the Church, being an account of the earthly growth or manifestation of God's kingdom, is most properly introduced by the mission of John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah. He came preaching THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN NEAR AT HAND. As his star declined, the theme was taken up by One mightier than he; who, proclaiming the same tidings, sent forth His disciples two by two before His face, to preach to the Jews, saying, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. This prophesying continued to the close of the earthly ministry of our Lord, a period of about three years.[1]

And as the Kingdom of God was the burden of all preaching at that time, so it was the object of universal and earnest expectation. The Law and the Prophets continued until John;

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[1] According to Dr. Jarvis, the Annunciation took place in March, and the Birth of our Lord on December 25, of the year 4707, J. P.; He began His ministry 30 years after, January 6, of 4738; He was crucified on March 26, rose March 28, and ascended May 6, of 4741, J. P.; there being 33 years and about 3 months between the Birth and Crucifixion. See *Chronological Introduction* to the Hist. of the Church, by the Rev. S. F. Jarvis, D.D., LL.D. For *dates* in this vol. see Riddle, *Ecc. Chron.*

but when the fulness of the times revealed a higher Dispensation,[2] all men, consciously or unconsciously, were pressing towards it. Among the Jews devout men were waiting for the Kingdom.[3] Among the Gentiles, Poets sang of Saturnian rule: Philosophers dreamed of ideal commonwealths. Wise men from the East came with regal gifts to the cradle of the Lord. Rude soldiers from the West flocked with scribes and pharisees, publicans and sinners, to the baptism of repentance proclaimed by John the Baptist.

*Expectation of the Kingdom.*

Our Lord himself preached the Kingdom chiefly under the form of similitudes or parables. In a series of simple pictures, drawn from familiar scenes and ordinary callings, yet so nicely delineated that every stroke and shade has a meaning of its own, He left an inexhaustible treasure of the "notes," or prominent features of the Church. The promised reign was to be earthly in its position, heavenly in its character;[4] it was to be established everywhere;[5] it was to embrace the common social mixture of good and evil;[6] it was to be subject to all the vicissitudes of natural growth and progress,[7] yet to vindicate its divine origin by a wondrous vitality,[8] and power of persistence and endurance:[9] in short, it was to be visible and invisible, present and future, natural and supernatural, a mystery, and to some a stumbling-block,[10] till its complete and triumphant manifestation at the end of time. Our Lord taught more clearly, that the Head of this dispensation was to be absent in body, though present in Spirit; and in His absence its affairs were to be administered by servants, having all a charge in common, yet each with his own share of trust and responsibility.[11]

*Parables, Notes of the Church.*

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[2] S. Luke, xvi. 16.

[3] S. Mark, xv. 43.

[4] S. John, xvii. 15, 16.

[5] S. Matt. xiii. 33.

[6] S. Matt. xiii. 26.

[7] S. Mark, iv. 27, 28.

[8] S. Mark, iv. 31, 32.

[9] S. Matt. xvi. 18.

[10] S. Matt. xi. 6; S. John, xvii. 14.

[11] The parable of the *pound* indicates the common trust, that of the *talents* the different *degrees* of responsibility. S. Luke, xix. 12–25; S. Matt. xxv. 15.

*Works of Jesus.*

The works of Jesus, also, were evidently intended to be significant of the reign He came to establish among men. They were "signs" of the kingdom: parables in action. To the inquiry of the Baptist, whether the promised One had come, it was deemed an amply sufficient answer that "the lame walked, the blind saw, the deaf heard, lepers were cleansed, the dead were raised," and, as the crowning boon of all, that the poor had the Gospel preached to them.[12] It is not necessary to show here, how many of these miracles are capable of a typical, allegorical, or even prophetic application, foreshadowing certain features of the history of the Church.[13] It is enough to notice, in general, that they are miracles of mercy rather than of power; and in reference to the office of the State, or of society, are of a *complementary*, not antagonistic character. They show that Christ came not to destroy, but to complete, to fill up. His kingdom "full of grace and truth" was to leaven all other kingdoms; to infuse its own spirit into all other organizations; but, in the meantime, to address itself to objects not contemplated in the scheme of political societies, nor indeed capable of being profitably undertaken by them. Duty to Cæsar, therefore, can never interfere with duty to God. Between the two there is no rivalry, no antagonism. The kingdom, though in the world, is not of the world.

Such, in substance, was the teaching of our Lord, both in

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[12] S. Matt. xi. 3.

[13] Thus, *the two fishing scenes* (S. Luke, v. 6, and S. John, xxi. 11), the one before and the other after the Resurrection, the one with a *net broken* from the number of fishes, the other with the *net unbroken*, became symbols of the Church militant and the Church triumphant: so with *the two voyages* of our Lord's Disciples, which gave rise to that beautiful and expressive symbol of the heavenward-bound ship: so with many other images familiar to readers of the early Church fathers. Strauss, in his famous *Leben Jesu*, sees only this typical character of the miracles, and therefore treats them as myths. The early Fathers saw the same doctrinal and prophetic significance of the miracles, but were only the more convinced thereby that they were *facts*, namely *divine* facts. For the more meaning a fact has in it, the more divine it is. See Olshausen's *Com.* p. 356 (Am. ed.).

His words and works. The same complementary character distinguished His ethical precepts, and discourses to the people. Not novelty but harmony, completeness, and above all, authority, made His words such as never man spake. As the great seed-sower of the kingdom, He announced *principles* rather than dogmas: principles, which are ever budding with new life, whose vitality is as vigorous and fresh now, as when it first awakened the dull minds of the Disciples. It may be observed further, that in His way of announcing these principles He was the model of all teachers. The ancient philosophers, with perhaps one exception,[14] had in the promulgation of high truths addressed themselves exclusively to an elevated class. They had affected a knowledge which could be communicated only to the initiated few. It was a peculiarity of our Lord's instructions, that while they contained the profoundest truths, they were couched in language so perfect in form, so beautiful, so simple, so catholic, that though an angel may fail to penetrate their depth, yet a child may receive them with delight, and draw instruction from them. There was, therefore, no need of the "reserve," or *disciplina arcani*, affected by the philosophers. What was whispered in the ear was expressed in terms which could equally well be proclaimed from the house-top.

*His mode of teaching.*

But as our Lord preached the kingdom He proceeded *pari passu* to prepare and organize its Ministry; laying the foundation in Himself, as Prophet, Priest, and King, and in that chosen company of disciples, His "friends" and fellow-workers, who by faith and a special calling first became partakers of His life-giving nature. Himself the Rock and the living Stone, He made living stones of those whom He had enabled to confess Him.[15] This He did, however, only by degrees, and in proportion as the character of His mission was gradually unfolded.

*Ministry organized.*

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[14] Namely, *Socrates;* who was much ridiculed by the polished Athenians for clothing divine philosophy in the language of mechanics and shopkeepers.

[15] S. Matthew, xvi. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5; Ephes. ii. 20; Rev. xxi. 14.

Baptized in the Jordan unto the baptism of John, and sealed by the Witness and the Spirit from the Father, He began the *prophetic ministry* already spoken of in this chapter, and made both the Twelve and the Seventy partakers of the same. As He preached the coming kingdom and wrought "signs," He sent them before His face with a like message and like powers. By a wonderful course of minute teaching, of which the substance only is recorded in the Gospels,[16] He trained them the meanwhile for positions of higher trust afterwards to be given. So in the second stage of His ministerial work: when, on the night in which He was betrayed, He entered upon the exercise of His *priestly office*, offering Himself a willing offering for the sin of the whole world, He instituted a solemn memorial of His death and sacrifice, and commissioned the Apostles[17] to continue the same mystic rite in remembrance of Him. So, finally: when He began to enter upon His *reign*, having risen from the dead, a *king*, victorious over hell, and endued with all power in heaven and in earth, He gave them the full commission so often before promised;[18] sending them forth as the Father had sent Him, to make disciples of all nations, to evangelize and baptize, to minister in things sacred, to bind and loose, to teach, to

*Prophetic.*

*Priestly.*

*Kingly.*

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[16] S. John, xxi. 25.

[17] In the Christian Church, as in the Jewish—(1 Pet. ii. 5, and Exod. xix. 6)—the *kingly* and *priestly* character belongs to all believers, all being partakers of Christ the Head. But, as it belongs to Christ in one sense, and to His people in another, so it belongs to the ministry in a third sense. It belongs to Christ *absolutely*, as Head; to the ministry *ministerially*, as representing Christ to His people; and to His people *derivatively*, as His body, representing Him to the world at large. In the following work, however, I use the terms "kingly, priestly, and prophetic," in their larger sense, chiefly: as indicating respectively the ministry of *government*—of *rites*, *sacraments*, etc.,—and of that *out-going activity in works of mercy*, with preaching, teaching, etc., which is preparatory to the more exact training in the Church.

[18] S. Matt. xvi. 17–19; xix. 28; S. Mark, i. 17. In such passages there is a *promise.* In S. Matt. xxviii. 18, etc., etc., there is the actual *gift* of authority.

rule, and, in short, to be His Apostles or Ambassadors to the end of time.

*The great Forty Days.*

To this He added final and particular instructions; frequently appearing to the disciples during the space of forty days, performing miracles profoundly significant[19] of the spiritual character of His reign, and speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom.

*The Ascension.*

Having thus provided for the earthly future of His kingdom, like a prince, who, about to journey into a far country, commits the management of his estate to chosen ministers or stewards,[20] He gave His parting benediction to the Disciples; went away from them; ascended triumphantly into heaven, and sat down in His proper place at the right hand of God.

*The Disciples waiting.*

From the day of the Ascension, the Disciples waited in Jerusalem, for "the promise of the Father:" that "power" of the Holy Ghost, which should enable them to do the work committed to them, first in Jerusalem and Judæa, then in Samaria, and finally among all nations to the utmost borders of the earth.

*The Forming and Quickening.*

They were now an *Ecclesia*,[21] a spiritual commonwealth or society, duly called, trained, instructed, and commissioned for God's work; but it remained for the Spirit to give life and energy to their ministry. They were a house rightly ordered, with the candles set upon candlesticks, and each thing in its place; but it needed a divine Light to light the candles, that the order of the house might be made apparent. They were, in short, an organized body, fitly joined and compacted; but, as in the original creation God first formed man of the dust of the earth, and then breathed into his nostrils that breath of life by which man became a living soul, so, in the mystical Body of Christ, the framing and the quickening were kept distinct from one another. The Word had fashioned and created, the Spirit was to quicken. The King had organized, the Paraclete was to inspire, and energize, and guide: to give practical efficiency to the whole order and administration.

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[19] S. Luke, xxiv. 31; S. John, xx. 19; xxi. 1–11.

[20] S. Matt. xxv. 14.

[21] Ecclesia—*concilium*, *conciliabulum*, *synodus*, *collegium*, by which names it was often called in early times. The term "kingdom" applies to it only as complete in Christ the Head. We pray, therefore, "Thy kingdom come." We wait for "His appearing and His Kingdom."

*The King and Paraclete.*

In the meantime, however, the Disciples did not await in idleness the advent of the promised Paraclete. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication; and as a breach had been made in their body by the apostasy of Judas, they elected one of their number to fill the vacant place. Matthias was duly chosen by the action of the Disciples, and by the will of God. He took the Bishopric of Judas, and was numbered among the twelve Apostles.

*Matthias chosen.*

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PENTECOSTAL GIFT.

When the promised Day arrived, it found the Disciples, thus, in the fulness of their number as originally called. There were about one hundred and twenty names enrolled, among whom were the Twelve, and probably the Seventy, all belonging to that devout class of Jews who are described as waiting for the Kingdom. Besides these there were possibly as many as five hundred,[1] male and female, who were included under the general name of Brethren. Not this larger number, however, but probably only the smaller one first mentioned, were assembled "in one place" on the Day of Pentecost.

*Number of the Disciples.*

At the same time, in compliance with the Law, and by virtue of a long course of providential Preparation,[2] there was a much larger concourse of devout and faithful Jews, who had come up from every quarter to the annual Feast of the First Fruits. For the Israelites, at this time, were at home everywhere. In the expressive language of the Prophet, they were "sown" among the nations; they were "the dew upon the grass" of heathen society, preparing the field for the sickle of the Gospel reapers. They were bearing an ecumenical witness to the unity of the Godhead. It was as representatives, then, of a vast system of preparation, that these devout Jews, the Flower of the Dispersion, had once more assembled to wait upon the Lord, and to give utterance to that unceasing prayer of the Jewish heart, "Lord, wilt Thou, at this time, restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"

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[1] 1 Cor. xv. 6.

*The Assemblage of devout Jews.*

*Preparation.*

The congregation of the Disciples was thus in the midst of the Assembly of devout Hebrews, the Dispersion, the Nations, as the "little leaven hid in three measures of meal." It required but a breath from on high to enable that leaven to leaven the whole lump.

How that Breath came, in a way as beautifully significant as it was miraculous, filling the whole house wherein the Disciples were assembled, and what was the immediate result, is familiar to every reader of the Acts of the Apostles.

*Descent of the Spirit.*

It is sufficient to note here, that though three thousand souls were forthwith converted to the Gospel, and though every day afterwards added to the number, the Apostles were at no loss in establishing order among the multitudes who thus eagerly pressed in. The divine instructions in "the things pertaining to the Kingdom," recently received, had doubtless prepared them for so great an emergency. Accordingly, those who believed were baptized. Upon those baptized, the Apostles laid their hands, imparting to them "gifts," which, in the lack of a sufficient number of duly trained Ministers, seem to have fitted the whole body for some share in the great work, and to have made the ministry, for a while, almost coextensive with the Church itself.[3] At all events, the converts freely offered themselves, and all they had, to the disposal of the Apostles.

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[2] The Preparation for Christianity is the history of Civilization in the ancient world. As the Law was a *Pædagogus* leading men to Christ, so, also, says S. Clement of Alexandria, was the philosophy or culture of the Greeks. The same good Providence was manifest in both. On this subject see Bossuet's *Histoire Universelle*, Jarvis's *Church of the Redeemed*, and Neander's *Introduction*. This last, however, is a history of the preparation for the *Gospel* merely; whereas the progress of civilization among the ancients, both Jews and Greeks, prepared the way equally for the Gospel and the Church. Mosheim's first chapter dwells too much on the negative preparation; *i.e.*, upon the failure of everything that preceded Christianity.

*Gifts given.*

In this way the foundation of the Church was laid in that race, or rather in that blessed and covenanted "remnant," to which it had been originally promised. The chosen people continued the chosen people still. Jews were the first proclaimers of the Gospel; Jews its first converts; the first demonstration of its order, as of its power, was in a community exclusively Judaic.

*Judaic Foundation.*

And the application of this principle was not confined to Jerusalem, or Palestine only. These Pentecostal converts, sojourners as many of them were in far distant lands, could hardly have failed, after a while, to return to the places of their dispersion, and to spread the glad tidings of what they had seen and heard.[4] As S. Paul testified not many years after,[5] the sound of the Gospel went out into all

*In all parts of the World.*

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[3] The "gifts" were given "*for* the perfecting (*i.e.*, fitting) of the saints (*i.e.*, believers), *for* (or literally *into* or *unto*) work of ministry," etc. Ephes. iv. 7–12. The word "ministry" I understand in its larger sense, as including all kinds of service to the Church.

[4] Among the first preachers mentioned in the Acts were "Nicolas, a proselyte of *Antioch*," "Ananias," a "disciple" in *Damascus*, "men of *Cyprus* and *Cyrene*," and Lucius, of *Cyrene;* to whom may be added Saul of *Tarsus*, and Apollos of *Alexandria*. Acts, vi. 5; ix. 10; xi. 20; xiii. 1, etc.

[5] Rom. x. 18.

lands, its words to the ends of the world. Through Judaism, as through a vast nervous tissue, the notes of the Pentecostal trumpet were indefinitely prolonged. Everywhere Israelites believed, or had opportunity to believe. Of the wide-spreading tree of Judaism, therefore, it might truly be said, that the stock which contained the faith, not merely the blood, of Abraham, was renovated and saved by reception of the Gospel: the unbelieving branches were alone cut off.[6]

## CHAPTER III.

### THE TWELVE IN JERUSALEM.

*Twelve Years.*

THE Apostles remained in Jerusalem, for a period, it is supposed, of about twelve years; making frequent excursions, however, into the towns of Judæa, Samaria, Galilee, and even, it may have been, into more distant regions.

*Importance of Jerusalem.*

So long a residence in one place was warranted by the importance of Jerusalem, as the sacred city of the Hebrews, as a point of universal concourse, and as the living heart of orthodox religion.[1] From such a centre it was easy to keep an eye upon all other quarters. It was the place, especially, to which those devout men resorted annually, who were in fit preparation for the Kingdom, and who could be most readily converted, not into believers merely, but into Evangelists and Teachers for all parts of the world. It was the most proper position, in short, for the first manifestation of the Gospel, both in its power and in its order. As the proselytes, gathered everywhere from among the Jews of the

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[6] The subject of the Judaic foundation is ably brought out in Thiersch's *History of the Christian Church*, translated by Thomas Carlyle, Esq.

[1] See Professor Blunt's *Lectures on the Church History of the First Three Centuries.*

Dispersion, would naturally look to Zion as the fountain-head of the true Law,[2] nothing could be more essential than that the system established there should be in every way perfect and complete. The Apostles, therefore, were not unmindful of the command to "go forth" and "disciple" all the nations. They made Jerusalem their starting-point. They concentrated there for a while that outgoing energy, by which the world was to be converted. For the further stages of their mission, they waited till the door should be fairly opened, or till the Lord Himself should give them the expected sign.

*Out of Zion the Law.*

The Church in Jerusalem, therefore, was the object of interest for a while to the whole company of the Apostles. Under their care, the little band of Pentecost grew into a large and thoroughly disciplined host. Trained already to the form of godliness by the admirable discipline of the Synagogue and Temple, the Hebrew converts were moulded with little effort into an orderly, regular, self-sacrificing life. The doctrine of the Apostles was their rule of faith; the communion of the Apostles their bond of fellowship. To avoid needless separation from their countrymen, they resorted for "prayers" to the Temple. To abstain from needless offence, they celebrated the "breaking of bread," and the "love-feast," in houses more retired. Giving themselves and their all to the common cause, with a profound conviction that the work before them was one which demanded their utmost efforts, they spontaneously fell into a sort of camp-life: a continuation, as it were, of that annual exhibition of mutual support, and fraternal equality, which the Jews were accustomed to afford at their solemn feasts. For it was not the least of the advantages of those great gatherings, that they promoted, for the time being at least, a hospitality which made "all things common." They were seasons at which the rich differed from the poor chiefly in the power of giving and entertaining. The earliest Jewish Christian Church was a prolongation, as it were, of one of these happy times. It was a Pentecostal week ex-

*The Pentecostal Society*, A.D. 33.

*Not Communist.*

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[2] Mic. iv. 2.

tending itself into a Pentecostal life. It required, of course, no little sacrifice of domestic comfort. But the sacrifice was a spontaneous and free-will offering. It was accompanied, therefore, with a gladness and singleness of heart, which distinguished it from mere communistic or monastic schemes, and commended it to the favor of all classes of the people.

*Sin of Ananias and Sapphira.*

So heavenly a state of things could not continue long undisturbed in any community of men. Ananias and Sapphira, attempting to serve two masters, introduced into the infant society the old Jewish leaven of secret mammon-worship. It was the sin of Achan: avarice availing itself of things devoted to the Lord. It was an offence that lay at the door of the Church's progress: and was punished by the same righteous vengeance, which on two occasions before had armed our Lord with the knotted scourge, and which we find breaking out twice afterwards on the thresholds respectively of Samaritan and Gentile Christianity.

*Dissensions.*

Differences, also, which had been forgotten in the first glow of charity, began to be felt again, and the peace of the Church was marred by frivolous dissensions.

*The Seven Deacons,* A.D. 34.

The Hellenist converts murmured against the Hebrews, because, as they complained, their widows were neglected in the daily ministration of the bounties of the Church. In such cases Charity is obliged to call in system to her aid. To do justice to any ministration there must be special ministers appointed for the purpose. The Apostles, therefore, called an Assembly of the body of the Disciples; stated the incompatibility of cares of this kind with their own more spiritual duties; and caused seven men to be chosen, probably from among the Hellenist party, whom they set apart by the laying on of hands to attend to such matters in future. The seven thus chosen and ordained, are the first, perhaps,[3] who received the distinctive title of Deacons.

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[3] This, and other matters connected with the Pentecostal Church, are amply discussed in Mosheim's *Commentaries*, and Bishop Hinds's *History of the First Century*.

A similar necessity for orderly distribution of ministerial cares led the Apostles, about this time, according to Eusebius, or it may have been a little later, to place James, surnamed the Just, one of the Lord's brethren, in special oversight of the Church in Jerusalem. Though the Apostles remained in the city, or thereabouts, yet their attention soon began to be diverted to other quarters. Nothing was more natural, then, than that a responsibility, which devolving upon all alike might be in danger of being neglected, should be laid especially upon one as his proper and peculiar charge.

*James made Bishop.*

It is still a question whether this James is the same as the son of Alphæus, one of the original Twelve, or is to be numbered rather with Apostles of a somewhat later calling. If one of the Twelve, his oversight of the Church in Jerusalem is the first instance of one of their number confined to a local jurisdiction. Whether one of them or not, he was at all events a colleague of the Apostles, on terms of perfect equality with them; and was treated on all occasions of Apostolic conference, as one of the "pillars," or as the word in its connection seems to imply, one of the original pillars, of the Church.[4]

*James an Apostle.*

This settlement of the government in Jerusalem, under one responsible head, may have been hastened by a series of events, which followed close upon the appointment of the Seven. The increased zeal in preaching, and the growing popularity of the Gospel, awakened the spirit of persecution among the Sadducee rulers. Peter and John were seized twice, and narrowly escaped with their lives. A more furious storm was excited against Stephen, one of the seven deacons.

*Persecution,* A.D. 34.

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[4] Acts, xv. 13–22; Gal. ii. 9. In this last passage *James*, Cephas, and John give to Paul and Barnabas "the right hand of fellowship," and are spoken of as Apostles *before* these latter, *i.e.*, of an earlier calling. This seems to make James one of the original Twelve. The passages alleged against this view are easily interpreted in accordance with it. My own opinion is in favor of the identity of James of Jerusalem with James the son of Alphæus.

*Second Pentecost.*

*Death of Stephen.*

By the election of these officers, the Apostles had been enabled to give themselves more fully to the ministry of the Word. Others, who had the gift of utterance, followed their example. Multitudes were converted, and among them a great company of priests.[5] It seemed a second Pentecost. Old things were rapidly passing away, all things were in process of renewal. Conscious of the progress of this mighty change, and endowed to an extraordinary degree with prophetic and evangelic gifts, Stephen had borne a clear witness to the fulfilment of the Mosaic Law in Christ, and had drawn upon himself the special indignation of the more zealous pilgrims and sojourners. Being brought before the council, he bore the same testimony still. He was cast out of the city and stoned to death; but the mantle of his martyr spirit descended invisibly upon a young Benjamite standing by, with more than a double portion of his power and boldness.

*Dispersion of the Disciples.*

The death of Stephen was followed by a general persecution. Saul, who knew not as yet his own higher calling, was particularly active in scattering the flock. The dispersion that ensued, however, only disseminated the more widely the seeds of divine truth, and opened a way for the Gospel among distant nations.

*Philip the Deacon.*

*Simon Magus.*

Philip, an Evangelist by gift, and one of the seven Deacons by ordination, repaired to Samaria, preached, performed miracles, and baptized a great number of the people. Peter and John, hearing of this success, came down from Jerusalem, and set their Apostolic seal to the work of Philip. They laid their hands on the converts, and gave them miraculous gifts. Simon Magus, one of the number, coveted this Apostolic power, and offered money for it. Rejected by S. Peter, he became subsequently an apostate, and is known in history as the leader of the Gnostic heresy. He is still better known for that practical heresy, called *simony*, which has ever since remained "a gall of bitterness, and a bond of iniquity," in so many portions of the Church. From Samaria, Philip repaired to the desert region toward Gaza, where he baptized the Eunuch of Queen Candace, and so sent a seed of light to the distant land of Ethiopia.

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[5] The first allusion to *Presbyters* or *Elders* in the Jerusalem Church, is in Acts, xi. 30. As there is every probability that those who had been bred in the Judaic ministry became, on their conversion, ministers in the Church, we may suppose that Presbyters existed from the time of this conversion of "the great company of Priests," if not earlier.

*The Eunuch of Ethiopia.*

Other disciples, scattered abroad at the same time, were equally successful. Some went to Damascus; where they were hardly more than settled, when they learned to their dismay that their most eager persecutor, "the Benjamite wolf," was on his way to the city, with authority from the high-priest to carry them bound to Jerusalem. They soon learned to their astonishment, however, that the wolf had been converted into a chosen shepherd of the flock. Another party repaired to Cyprus, the home of the Levite Barnabas, soon to be reckoned among the Apostles. Others fled to Phœnice; and at length, after the lapse of several years, the door to the Gentiles having been in the mean time opened by that Apostle to whom the keys of the kingdom had been promised, another party preached with great success to the Hellenic population of Antioch, the head of the province of Syria, and in fact the great metropolis of the East.

*Other Disciples.*

But the storm which was thus widely scattering the seeds of truth, had long since spent its fury in Jerusalem itself. Toward the end of the reign of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate was deposed from the government of Judæa; Caiaphas was ejected from the high-priesthood; and in the succeeding reigns of the Emperors Caligula and Claudius, Judæa and Samaria were annexed to the presidency of Syria, and all Palestine came under the rule of Herod Agrippa. These events proved favorable, for a while, to the tranquillity of the Christians. The Jews, absorbed in troubles of their own, had little time for persecution. A great calm ensued.[6] S. Peter availed

*Persecution ceases,* A.D. 36–41.

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[6] Jarvis, *Church of the Redeemed,* Period v. ch. vii.

*S. Peter visits the Churches.*

himself of the opportunity to exercise both his episcopal and his evangelic calling; visiting the churches in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, and confirming the disciples in the unity of the Faith. It was in the course of these visitations that Cornelius, the devout Roman Soldier, was admitted with his household to Baptism; and so a foundation was laid for a Gentile Christian Church in the important city of Cæsarea.[7]

*The other Apostles.*

Of other Apostles, at this period, there is no express record. It is to be presumed, however, that most of them were engaged in the same way as S. Peter. Within the circle of Judæa, and Samaria, and Galilee, there was room enough for them all; and while they still met at Jerusalem, as the common centre, they probably saw less of that city every year. Before they departed for more distant fields, one of the four Gospels, that of S. Matthew, had been written. Having had experience of the wants of growing Churches, they can hardly be supposed to have parted company without some mutual understanding as to creeds, forms of worship, rules of discipline, and the like; though in all such matters the mere fact that they had been trained in the same school, and for so long a period associated in the same field of labor, would be enough, independently of the gift of inspiration, to secure a reasonable degree of uniformity in their preaching and in their practice.

*Inspired History limited.*

And it is for this reason, probably, that in the inspired narrative of the Acts of the Apostles we have only one line of Apostolic labor followed out with any approach to minuteness. Sacred History is averse to idle repetitions. Knowing what one Apostle did under any given circumstances, we have a right to take for granted, that all under like circumstances followed much the same course.

From the time of the conversion of the Greeks at Antioch there had been a lively and friendly intercourse between the

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[7] It is to be noted here, that Jerusalem, Samaria, Cæsarea, were the heads respectively of the Jewish, Samaritan, and Gentile populations of Palestine.

Christians of that city, and those of the Mother Church. Barnabas had been sent thither, apparently with Apostolic powers; and had taken with him Saul, whom he found in Tarsus. Quite a company of Prophets had followed. In return, the Antiochean Christians, having heard of the distress of their brethren in Judæa by reason of a great dearth which prevailed about the year forty-three, made a collection for their relief, and sent it to them by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. About the same time, Herod Agrippa, the king of Palestine, took offence at certain of the Church leaders; put James the Elder, the brother of John, to death; and finding this course to be popular with the Jews, cast Peter into prison. There were thus two causes at work, to impel the Apostles forth to their wider field of labor. There was persecution at home, and an open door abroad. Such circumstances would naturally be regarded as an indication of God's will. Accordingly, Peter, when miraculously released from his imprisonment, went down to Cæsarea, the scene of the earliest success among the Gentiles, and there for a while abode. Not very long after, Barnabas and Saul were sent forth from Antioch on their first missionary journey. There is good reason to believe that a similar course was at the same time pursued by most, if not all, of the Apostles.

*Mission to the Gentiles,* A.D. 40-45.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CHURCHES OF THE GENTILES—S. PAUL.

It has already been seen, that the persecution which arose about Stephen caused the Gospel to flow out in all directions, and the wave continuing to roll on long after the storm had ceased, extended at length as far as the great metropolis of Syria, and resulted in the establishment there of a flourishing congregation of Gentile Christians. In the same

*The Gospel flows out,* A.D. 42.

way, it has been noticed incidentally that, some years prior to this event, the door had been opened to the Gentiles, in a more formal way, by the ministry of S. Peter, in the case of the Roman Centurion Cornelius.

*Gentiles admitted to Grace.*

With this first example of Gentile faith, the question of immediate admission to the Church by Baptism, or of a previous probation by obedience to the Law, naturally came up for determination. To S. Peter's mind it was made clear by a special revelation. It was symbolically shown him that God had cleansed what had hitherto been judged unclean. Humanity in its varied types was to be regarded henceforward as a new creation; a clean and docile flock, let down, as it were, out of Heaven, and conducted by God's own hand to the door of the Ark.

*Principle admitted.*

This pregnant principle, confirmed by the outpouring of miraculous gifts upon Cornelius and his house, was acknowledged by the Church of Jerusalem, and began to be generally apprehended as a settled rule.

*Cæsarea a Mother Church.*

From this time forward also, Cæsarea, the home of the congregation formed by the household of Cornelius, became a centre and Mother Church of Gentile Christianity.

*Gospel in other places.*

The preparation of heart and mind, so remarkably shown in this instance, was doubtless going on simultaneously in many other parts of the civilized world. In Rome itself there were Christians at a very early date; and it is said that Simon Peter went thither just after the baptism of Cornelius.[1] It is more probable that the tradition is derived from a later visit of the Apostle, or from attributing to Peter the acts of some other of the many Simons who were then engaged in evangelic labors. In parts of Egypt also, the Gospel seems to have been proclaimed long before the arrival of S. Mark, the founder of the Church in that country. The sect of Therapeutæ,[2] described by Philo the Jew, has the appearance of having been a sort of Jewish Christian Society. Glimpses, in short, of a preparatory Pentecostal preaching of the Gospel, followed in due time by the more decisive labors of Apostolic founders, are discernible in the traditions, or in the customs, of many of the early Churches.

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[1] It is more certain, as Dr. Jarvis shows, that the Jews who had been banished from Rome under Tiberius, and who were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, were, about this time, allowed to return to the imperial city. They, doubtless, carried the Gospel with them. See *Church of the Redeemed,* Per. V. vii. 1.

*More decided manifestation.*

But the time had come at length for that full manifestation of the grace of God to the Gentiles, which, as destined to take root in the richest soil of our humanity, and to bear the most varied and abiding fruits, has been chosen by inspiration as the special historic theme of the first century.

Saul of Tarsus,[3] the flower of the Jewish schools, a Roman by civil rights, a Greek in versatility and force of mind, had been converted, baptized, and set apart to the Apostolic office, soon after the martyrdom of S. Stephen; but owing to the unripeness of the times for his peculiar work, had been obliged to school his fiery zeal for several years in comparatively obscure and unimportant fields of labor. From this retirement Barnabas was inspired to call him forth. Being himself a man of Prophetic and Apostolic gifts, and being sent by the Mother Church in Jerusalem to build up the Greek congregation in the great metropolis of Syria, he discerned in Saul a suitable partner of his labors, and invited him accordingly into that noble field.

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[2] The fact, that these "citizens of Heaven upon earth," as they called themselves, had some peculiarities not wholly Christian, weighs nothing against the theory of Eusebius on the subject; for nothing could be more natural than that imperfect imitations of the Pentecostal community in Jerusalem should spring up among Jews in other regions. Apollos, the learned Alexandrian, preached the Gospel, not only before he was baptized, but before he was more than partially instructed. Acts xviii. 24–28; Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* ii. 17; Philo Judæus, ii. 470, Ed. Mango (vol. iv. p. 6, Bohn's Ed.). With this compare the account of Christian manners in the *Epistola ad Diognetum*, an extract from which is given in Schaft's *History of the Church*, p. 146.

[3] Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Epistles of S. Paul*; Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*.

*In Antioch believers called Christians,* A.D. 45.

In Antioch the two labored together for three years or more. Multitudes of Greeks were converted. A new centre and mother city of Religion was established. And, as if to mark an epoch in Church History, the term Nazarenes, which the Jews had applied to the followers of Jesus, began to be replaced by the more honorable title of Christians.

*The two Apostles sent forth.* A.D. 45.

About the year forty-five, just after a season of extraordinary fasting and prayer, Antiochean prophets were inspired by the Holy Ghost to "separate Barnabas and Saul" for a mission still more fruitful and extensive.

*Cyprus.*

Being thus sent forth by the Spirit,[4] the Apostles repaired to Seleucia, thence to the Island of Cyprus; which having traversed from end to end, preaching in all the synagogues of the Jews, they at last stood in the presence of the Deputy, or Proconsul, Sergius Paulus.

*Elymas.*

Here occurred the third of those great "signs" of judgment, which marked the initiative, as it were, of the three main stages of the Church's progress. The Gospel had been met by two forms of hypocrisy in the persons of Ananias the Jew and Simon Magus the Samaritan. Now, in the person of Elymas, or Bar-Jesus, it is encountered by the Spirit of negation and downright contradiction. The crisis was one of vast importance. Over the strong and skeptical but superstitious intellect of the Roman world, Sorcery now wielded the sceptre which had long since fallen from the palsied hand of Religion. To gain a hearing for the Gospel, this baleful power must be confronted and disarmed. The contest was easily decided. Elymas, fit type of godless intellect, was blinded for a season; and, reduced to a childlike condition, had to look around for some one to guide him. Sergius Paulus believed. And Saul, henceforward called Paul in memory, it is supposed, of this great victory, departed shortly after from Paphos, and proceeded with his company to Perga in Pamphylia.

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[4] Saul's *ordination* was by the mouth of the Lord himself: Acts, xxii. 14, 15, 17–21; 2 Cor. xii. The laying on of hands, in Acts, xiii. 1–4, was, therefore, not an ordination, but either an extraordinary seal, through *Prophets* specially inspired for the occasion, to the ordination previously given; or, as is more likely, a mere setting apart to missionary labor.

*Course of the Apostles.*

Thence, the course of the Apostles may be briefly described, as, *first*, a journey forward to preach the Gospel, and baptize; and *then* a return on the same line, with a careful visitation of all the evangelized towns and cities, to confirm the disciples, to ordain Presbyters; in short, to organize local Churches—a work uniformly accompanied by prayer and fasting. To account for the rapidity with which the establishment of local ministries was accomplished, we must suppose not only great zeal and self-devotion on the part of the new converts, but a large outpouring of supernatural gifts. In many cases, fit men were pointed out by the spirit of prophecy. Timothy, a young convert, thus designated by prophecies going before,[5] was selected for a higher and larger ministry in the Church; and after S. Paul's next visit to that region, accompanied him constantly as a chosen disciple and companion.

*Return to Antioch, A.D. 48.*

Having returned to the Hellenist mother city, the Apostles cheered all hearts with the tidings that the door of faith had been effectually opened to the Gentile world. This door, however, was near being closed again by the perverse dogmatism of certain Judaizing Christians.

*Question with the Judaizers.*

It was the same question that had already been settled in the case of Cornelius; coming up, however, in a somewhat modified shape. Judaism had been removed, as it were, from the vestibule of the Gospel: it was now endeavoring to find itself a place in the very sanctuary. If not circumcised *before* admission to God's grace, should not the Gentiles at least be circumcised after? Should not obedience to the Law be one of the fruits of the grace vouchsafed by the Gospel? The question was not one of ceremonial merely. It involved the completeness of the Church in Christ the Head. It involved by implication the divinity and absolute sovereignty of Christ the Head. To put the Law on a level with Grace, would be, in effect, to put Moses the servant on a level with Christ the Son.[6] The strong bias that existed in the Jewish mind towards this form of heresy, made it the more necessary that the real position of the Church should be clearly and conclusively defined.

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[5] 1 Tim. i. 18.

*Settled in Council at Jerusalem,* A.D. 50 *or* 52.

The question was finally settled in a council of the Apostles, with the Elders and Brethren of the Mother Church in Jerusalem. One point of natural law, almost forgotten by the heathen, and three ancient precepts[7] of the Noachic covenant, were reënacted. Beyond this, no legal burden was allowed to be imposed upon Gentile Christians. It doubtless added weight to this decree, that it had been drawn up by James, whose name had been unwarrantably used by the Judaizers, and who held a high place in the Church as the Bishop, or Apostle, of the Circumcision.

*The Church free.*

By this important act, the Church was absolved from the bands of the Law, and Christianity was declared complete in itself. Salvation was a gift intended for all men. It was to be given freely to all who had faith to receive it. The Law could add nothing to it: the absence of the Law could detract nothing from it. The Tree of Life had taken root below the crust of Judaism; and whatever leaves it might afterwards put forth in the shape of needful forms, or canons, would draw their nourishment, not from any national or sectional source, but as it were from the Catholic soil of redeemed and sanctified humanity.

*S. Paul's general course.*

This point settled, the Apostle of the Gentiles could proceed unembarrassed in his mighty labors. The course pursued in his first journey he continued, so far as we can learn, to the end of his life. To visit the Churches already founded; to write, or send messengers, to them; to add new fields of labor by missionary journeys into parts unappropriated as yet by other Apostles; to repair occasionally to Jerusalem, or Antioch, on errands of charity, friendship, or devotion; and, finally, to concentrate his efforts by residences of two or three years in the great world-centres, the *ganglions*, as it were, of the social system; these, with sufferings, toils, successes, unparalleled in the history of human labor, are the sum of that wonderful life, so simply and yet so graphically portrayed in the living narrative of the Acts.

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[6] Heb. iii. 5, 6; Col. ii. 10.

[7] Acts, xv. 29. Whether these three precepts were intended to be permanently binding may be doubted: that they were not rigidly enforced, is certain, from Rom. xiv. 14; 1 Cor. x. 25, etc. On this point see Hinds's *Hist. of Chr. Ch.*, part ii. ch. iv.

*S. Paul's second journey: Corinth,* A.D. 50–53.

*Silas.*

*Timothy.*

*Corinth.*

In the Apostle's second journey, the design of which was to "visit the brethren in every city where he had preached the word of God," having separated from Barnabas on account of a dissension with regard to Mark, he took Silas with him, and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the Churches. At Lystra he added Timothy to his company. Thence passing through Phrygia and Galatia, he naturally looked towards Ephesus, the great and enlightened centre of Asia Proper. But, diverted from that field by a special admonition of the Holy Ghost, he crossed over to Macedonia; preached the Gospel in Philippi, Thessalonica, and other chief cities; left Timothy and Silas to go on with the work; spent a short time in Athens; and finally took up his abode in Corinth, and made of it another great centre of Christian influence. There S. Paul remained, pouring out his whole heart to the most eager, susceptible, and inquisitive of all people, for more than eighteen months. From that conspicuous and cosmopolitan position, he kept an eye upon the Churches which he and his companions had established in Macedonia, Achaia, and the parts adjacent. Here, also, he began another fruitful branch of his labors, by writing two Epistles to the brethren in Thessalonica.

*Ephesus,* A.D. 54–58.

After a visit of devotion to Jerusalem and Antioch, he began his third journey by revisiting the Churches of Galatia and Phrygia in order, and confirming the Disciples. Then proceeding to Ephesus, another of those places where all tides met, he spread his nets there for three years or more, drawing within the circle of his influence all the chief towns of Asia Proper. This city was a great resort of the professors of diabolical arts. In combating these forms of "spiritual wickedness in high places," the Apostle seems to have drawn more largely upon supernatural resources, than in any other field of his labors. Driven at length from Ephesus, he made an extensive visitation of the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia.

*Towards Jerusalem.*

But a mysterious impulse from the Spirit turned his face once more towards Jerusalem, with an expectation of finding a way opened thence to Spain, through Italy and Rome; to the Christians of which latter city he wrote the most elaborate of his Epistles.[8] On his way he touched at many places; among others at Miletus, where he met the Ephesian pastors, and gave them a solemn charge. At every place where he touched, he received new warnings of the bonds and afflictions that awaited him in Jerusalem.

*Cæsarea,* A.D. 58–60.

*Rome,* A.D. 60–63.

Having arrived at the Jewish capital, he was received with great kindness by James, and found the Church there in a highly flourishing condition. But a sedition was stirred up against him among the fanatical Jews. Rescued from their violence by the Roman officers, he spent two years a prisoner in Cæsarea; whence, having appealed to Cæsar, he was finally sent to Rome, "an ambassador in bonds." In this greatest of world-centres, which had been for a long time the goal of his earnest aspirations, he taught with much freedom for two years or more, seeing the little flock grow into "a great multitude," as the heathen historian[9] implies, and maintaining a constant communication, by letter[10] and by Apostolic messengers, with the Churches of the vast field in which he and his companions had labored. For it is to be observed, that S. Paul's "company" had received continual accessions; and where he could not be present in person to superintend the Churches, he had reliable men at hand whom he could send in his place.

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[8] During this period were written the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, the *Galatians*, the *Romans*.

[9] Taciti, *Annal.* xv. 44.

[10] Epistles to the *Ephesians*, *Philippians*, *Philemon*, *Hebrews*, *Colossians*.

*Spain, Gaul, Britain,* A.D. 63-67.

That the hope so confidently expressed in the Epistles to Philemon and the Hebrews[11] was in due time fulfilled; that the Apostle, set at liberty, revisited once more the field of his mighty labors, making permanent provision for the supreme government of the Churches; and that, fired with his old missionary zeal, he set his face towards the remote West, visiting Spain[12] as he had long intended, and, as tradition says, Gaul and the British Isles; all this has been commonly believed in the Church, and harmonizes entirely with the few intimations that can be gathered from the pages of Holy Writ.

*Nero. First General Persecution,* A.D. 64-67.

But, in the meantime, the world, governed by a mad tyrant, was falling into one of its epidemics of periodical frenzy. The Jews, at no time remarkable for their patience under the Roman yoke, had been galled into rebellion; the heathen were in a state of terrible excitement; and the hostility to the Gospel, which had never more than partially relaxed, and which caused Christianity to be everywhere spoken against, had been fanned into a fierce and almost universal hatred. The Christians were accused of the most atrocious crimes. Their religion was regarded as a baleful superstition. The tyrant Nero, strongly suspected of having set fire to Rome for his private entertainment, determined to divert suspicion from himself by turning its full force against the hated sect. The usual course, in such cases, was to extort confessions by the rack. "At first," says the heathen historian,[13] "some were seized who plead guilty; afterwards, on their testimony, a great multitude were convicted, not

*Cruelties.*

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[11] Phil. 22; Heb. xiii. 19-23. It was probably after his release that he wrote the Epistle to Titus, and the *first* to Timothy. Neander, *Planting of Christianity*, iii. 10, argues ably for a second imprisonment. Dr. Schaff, *Apostolic Church*, makes an elaborate argument against it, but in his later work seems to admit it as at least explaining certain difficulties in the New Testament.

[12] Rom. xv. 24-28.

[13] Tacit. *Annal.* xv. 44.

of incendiarism, but of enmity to mankind. To tortures mockery was added. The victims were sewed up in the skins of beasts, thrown to dogs, hung on crosses, or smeared with pitch and set on fire, to light the streets by night.'' Nero revelled in such scenes; and as he opened his gardens for the hideous entertainment, looking on with unrestrained delight, or drove about the city in the garb of a charioteer, his lineaments stamped themselves upon the Christian mind as the very image of Antichrist. The persecution became general, and raged till the death of Nero, about four years. The Christians of that period, however, were too much disturbed and scattered, and perhaps too confident in their expectations of the approaching end of all things, to chronicle their own sufferings. Beyond the brief and hostile accounts of Tacitus, no unquestioned record of the persecution remains. Its horrors are to be inferred from the deep tinge they left upon legendary tradition.

*Martyrdom of S. Paul,* A.D. 67.

S. Paul returned to Rome while the persecution was still raging, probably not long before the tyrant's death; and there, in company with S. Peter, bore his last witness to the Truth. Being a Roman citizen, he was put to death with the sword. His second Epistle to Timothy, written in prison when he was ready and willing to be offered, and alluding to his position, though without a word of complaint against the monster from whose cruelty he suffered, has, in view of the evil times coming upon the Church, a tone of sadness in it; but, with regard to his own calling, is a wonderful testimony to posterity of the spirit in which the last trial was looked forward to and encountered. It is probable, from the same Epistle, that all his companions were not equally courageous.

*Christians timid.*

Christians, as a body, had little of that spirit which flies into the face of death. They were, in fact, a timid flock. In every persecution their first impulse was to flee. Equally removed from the high-wrought fanaticism which nerved the Jews of that period, and from the stoic indifference which made the heathen scoff at danger, their courage was merely that of a good conscience and good hope; and when taken at unawares was often found deficient. It had this merit, however, that though it could flee, it could not yield. Simon Peter, it is said, showed some signs of his original infirmity almost to the last moment. He was fleeing from Rome when the Lord met him and turned him back. But S. Paul was naturally of a different temperament. His splendid genius was sustained by a tense and uncompromising spirit, ever on the alert, never taken at fault, keen, fiery, and almost fierce in its rapidity of movement, which caused the name of the Benjamite wolf[14] to cleave to him in a complimentary sense, when in some respects it seemed singularly inappropriate to his character. These being the natural traits of the Apostle, the quiet, familiar, almost business-like tone of the last of his Epistles is the more remarkable.

# CHAPTER V.

## POSITION OF S. PAUL AND HIS COMPANY.

*S. Paul the type of an enlarged Ministry.*

S. Paul thus labored, seemingly a supernumerary, one "last and least," "born out of due time," and "separate from his brethren" of the original Apostolic College: yet, surpassing them all in the variety, extent, and success of his labors, he became in reality "the fruitful bough" of the Apostolate, the representative of the Ministry as enlarged to meet the wants of the Gentile Churches. He is the type of that second Apostolate that sprang up, when the rod of the ministry "budded" with new life: when God gave the word, and a great company of Preachers went forth to all the borders of the earth.

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[14] "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf," etc., Gen. xlix. 27. It is probable, however, that the phrase was always understood in a good sense; for to the old religious mind *all* of God's creatures had something beautiful and good in them, and the *serpent*, *lion*, *eagle*, *wolf*, etc., were as often symbols of good as of evil. In this respect, the modern mind is less genial than the ancient, more apt to look at the eagle's claws than at his heaven-piercing eye.

*The Twelve Foundation-Stones.*

*Typical consistency.*

When our Lord chose the Twelve from among those "disciples," who had been with Him in His ministry, His first reference would seem to have been to the twelve tribes, and to the Theocracy as the type of the perpetual Divine government of the Church. That the foundation might be laid distinctly in that people with which the everlasting covenant had been made, He gave the first formal commission to Twelve, and Twelve only. Hence the solicitude of the Eleven to supply the place of Judas.[1] For the sake of typical consistency there must be twelve to receive the great gift of the Spirit. In the new Pentecost, as in the old, the tribes must all be represented. As a four-squared city, with twelve gates, twelve angels, twelve foundation-stones, the new Jerusalem is let down out of Heaven, and begins to shed her light upon the nations of them that are saved.[2]

*The Seventy typical of the Super-structure.*

But the historic continuity of the old Church and new being thus most fully and symmetrically expressed, in the organizing of the original Apostolic College, in the preaching of the Gospel for so many years to the Jews almost exclusively, and afterwards in making the first offer[3] of salvation to them in all places where they were found, there was no longer any need of strict adherence to the typical arrangement. The fruitful bough was to run over the wall of Judaic concisionism. The "Twelve" were to expand into the "Seventy."[4] Accordingly, as soon as the Church had found an open door for its larger mission, and had begun to go forth beyond the bounds of Israel proper, the number of Apostles was indefinitely increased.

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[1] It is to be noticed that Judas fell before the Apostolic commission was formally given. He was never, therefore, an Apostle in the full sense of the word.

[2] Rev. xxi. 10–27.

[3] This course was followed even by the "Apostles to the Gentiles."

[4] This number naturally leads one to such texts as Exod. i. 5; xv. 27; Numb. xi. 16; xxiv. 25; Ezek. viii. 11: that is, to the Seventy heads of families, prophets, elders, who were called to participate in the ministry of Moses. The *first* reference, therefore, of the Seventy, as of the Twelve, is to the

*S. Paul's Mission.*

With this multiplication of the chief ministry the name of S. Paul is particularly connected. His call to the Apostolate synchronized with that outgoing of Church life and shedding of the Spirit upon the Gentiles, that second Pentecost, as it were, which followed the martyrdom of S. Stephen :[5] his actual commencement of mission work with the gathering of a Hellenic Church in Antioch, and with the departure, one by one, of the Apostles to their more distant fields. His name (with that of Barnabas, and many others) is thus associated with the outermost of the three great circles of the Apostolic mission. With Jerusalem, Judæa, Samaria, he had little to do. His witness was to the world. Among those twelve "names," which S. John represents as written on the "twelve foundations" of the "great city," his name is not included.

Mosaic dispensation. But behind all these passages there are the Seventy *families of the nations*, among whom the whole earth was divided : Gen. x.; in which chapter, again, we find not only the seventy names, representative of the nations, but twelve particularly distinguished as *fathers* or *founders ;* so that in the twelve, as well as in the seventy, there seems to be an *ultimate* reference to the Church universal. This is confirmed by Rev. iv. 4, where twenty-four Elders are round about the throne; viz., twelve for the Jewish and twelve for the Gentile Church. I may here observe, that when numbers are used in SS. for symbolic purposes, we are not to regard them always as mathematically correct. Thus, in Matt. i. the fourteen generations are not all the generations that might be counted in the period given. So the seventy and the twelve were not *all the Disciples* of our Lord; for in Acts, i. 15, we find the number of the names to be about one hundred and twenty. The same may be said of the list of names in Gen. x. On the whole, it seems to me that in choosing twelve and seventy under the general name of Disciples, our Lord provided for a subsequent enlargement of the Apostolate, and guarded against the mistake of those who would superstitiously confine the office to the exact number of twelve; or, who would make any other distinction than that of mere *priority* of commission, between the original Apostolic College and those who in course of time were added to it.

[5] This, according to Dr. Jarvis, was the end of the seventy weeks of Daniel. See *Church of the Redeemed*, Period V. pp. 247, 497.

It is of great importance, therefore, that S. Paul, as the type of the enlarged Apostolate, was in point of commission, of authority, and in everything, in fact, except priority of calling, fully equal to "them which were Apostles before" him; that "the uncircumcision was committed" to him as largely "as the circumcision was unto Peter"; that "James, Cephas, and John," those universally acknowledged "pillars," perceived the grace given unto him, and extended to him and Barnabas "the right-hand of fellowship." The Ministry to the Gentiles was thus put on a footing of entire equality with the original Ministry to the Jews. The branches grafted into the old stock of Israel received all the power and virtue of the stock itself.

*Equal to the Twelve.*

Of that numerous band of sons, disciples, colleagues, or fellow-laborers, who accompanied S. Paul in his travels, and some of whose names are associated with his, apparently on equal terms, in the superscription of the Epistles, Barnabas parted from him in the second missionary journey, and taking Mark with him, labored afterwards in Cyprus, his native country. So long as the two remained together, Barnabas held the position of leader; so that the heathen distinguished them respectively as *Jupiter* and *Mercurius*. He seems to have been a man of great suavity and dignity of character, and we may infer from his conduct with regard to Mark, that in his proper sphere as a "son of consolation" he showed no little firmness. It is interesting to notice that all the intimates of S. Paul, so far as we have the means of judging, were distinguished by traits of character the complementary opposites of his own.

*Companions of S. Paul.*

*Barnabas.*

Timothy, a disciple or son, and, as he appears in many places, a colleague of S. Paul, had a feminine delicacy, amounting it would seem to something like natural timidity[6] of character. But the grace of God, in his case as in that of other Apostles, proved superior to any such infirmity; and S. Paul regarded him with peculiar and tender affection.

*Timothy.*

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[6] 1 Cor. xvi. 10; 2 Tim. i. 6–8.

During the lifetime of S. Paul, he had frequent occasion to exercise temporarily, in various places to which he was sent, the gift and authority of an Apostle.[7] After his death, he became, according to the unanimous testimony of the ancients, the settled Bishop of Ephesus in Asia Minor; a post for which his gentleness and refinement of character seem eminently to have fitted him. Titus, in like manner, is said to have become the permanent chief-pastor of the Church in Crete. Silas, or Silvanus, and Sosthenes were also reckoned among Apostles, their names, like that of Timothy, being associated with S. Paul's in letters to the Churches; but of their position in later times there is no certain record. The same remark applies to Epaphras, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, Onesimus, Carpus, Erastus, Crescens, and many others to whom tradition assigns the name "Apostle and Bishop," and sometimes "Martyr." But tradition is a sieve, which seldom preserves more than the husks of a life. The name and office, and sometimes the field of labor, may remain: the deeds, the words, the finer traits of character, almost invariably escape.[8]

*Titus.*

*Silas, and others.*

S. Luke is one of the few companions of S. Paul to whom tradition does not appear to have assigned a particular local charge. He lived, it is said, to a great age. He was with S. Paul in his last imprisonment; and from the peculiar summary of trials in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy, as compared with the account of the first missionary journey related in the Acts,[9] one might conjecture that the Apostle, when he wrote, had been quite recently engaged in recounting to the Evangelist that early portion of his history. Death may have intervened before he came to the period of his more recent labors, after the first imprisonment in

*S. Luke.*

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[7] Rom. xvi. 21; 2 Cor. i. 19; Phil. ii. 19; 1 Thess. iii. 2.

[8] Tillemont, *Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire Ecclésiastique,* gives with discrimination, but not in a skeptical spirit, all that is known on this and similar subjects.

[9] Tim. iii. 11; Acts, xiv.

Rome: and as S. Luke wrote only what he had seen himself, or had received from eye-witnesses,[10] the abrupt conclusion of the Acts may be thus accounted for.

John Mark, frequently confounded with S. Mark the Evangelist, was probably the same whom S. Paul commends to the Colossians[11] as a nephew of S. Barnabas; who was with the same Apostle in Rome, during his first imprisonment, as a fellow-laborer; and whose services he particularly desired at a later period.[12] If so, it is a pleasing reflection that the young man who abandoned the two Apostles in their first missionary journey, and was the occasion of a fierce contention in the second, afterwards was enabled so amply to redeem his character.

*John Mark.*

These, and many others, some of whose names are preserved only in obscure traditions, constituted the company of S. Paul: his Apostolic staff, as it were, by whose active coöperation, as Apostles or Messengers of the Churches, he was enabled to maintain a constant and vigilant superintendence of the vast and growing field of his planting. Among these also he found the trustworthy men to whom he could commit the whole burden of his own "care of the Churches," when he was obliged to leave it.

*His Helpers and Successors.*

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[10] Luke, i. 2. [11] Coloss. iv. 10. [12] Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MISSION OF THE TWELVE.—MADNESS OF JEWS AND HEATHEN.

*The Twelve.*

Of the labors of the Twelve in the wider field of their mission, the records are surprisingly scant, and the traditions unsatisfactory. Three only of their number received surnames from the Lord; and, with the exception of these three, their names are written only on the Judaic foundation-stones. Indeed, one of this smaller number, S. James, surnamed the Greater, the elder brother of S. John, was taken to his rest by martyrdom[1] before the Gentile superstructure was generally begun.

*S. James the Greater.*

*S. Andrew.*

S. Andrew, the first called of the Apostles, in whom we recognize the amiable traits of his brother Simon without the fervid genius of that great Apostle, is said to have preached in Scythia and Sogdiana, and was crucified in Greece. The letter describing his death, professedly written by the Presbyters and Deacons of Achaia, is either spurious or grossly interpolated.

*S. Thomas.*

The name of S. Thomas is associated with the memory of evangelical labors in Parthia, Persia, and India; though the application of the last of these names is somewhat doubtful. S. James the Less, the son of Alphæus, has been commonly identified by Latin writers with James the Just, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. If not thus identified, it is quite uncertain where he labored. S. Jude, surnamed Thaddæus, or Lebbæus, the brother of James, journeyed to Lybia, it is said, and preached also in Arabia, Idumæa, and Mesopotamia. He is not to be confounded with another Thaddæus, one of the Seventy, who in

*S. James the Less.*

*S. Jude.*

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[1] Acts, xii. 2.

*S. Philip.*

*SS. Bartholomew, Matthew, Matthias, and Simon.*

fulfilment of a promise said to have been made by our Lord to Abgar,[2] King of Edessa, went as Apostle to that city, and labored there with great honor and success. S. Philip, frequently confounded with Philip, one of the seven Deacons, preached in Scythia and Phrygia. S. Bartholomew went to Armenia and India; S. Matthew and S. Matthias to Ethiopia; S. Simon, the Chananite, to some part of Mesopotamia. The name Simon, however, was so common among the Pentecostal preachers, that the two Apostles so named had many things accredited to them in tradition which in all probability belonged to other evangelists.

*Causes of opposition.*

It has been generally believed that the majority of the Apostles, and, perhaps, all of them except S. John, suffered death by martyrdom.[3] This is admitted to have been the case with four out of the five whose history is best known. One thing is certain, that wherever the first preachers went they carried their lives in their hands. Without judging harshly of the Roman laws, which, considering the general character of the superstitions they were aimed at,[4] were sufficiently tolerant, the Gospel was in its very nature a *martyrium:* a testimony unto death, before magistrates, kings, and nations, against all that was held sacred by the bulk of the heathen world. Had it been content to take a place among the crowd of national or local superstitions, it would probably have continued unmolested. But such a position was against its very nature. It came before men as a novelty, which provoked contempt; it was uncompromising, which awakened hatred; it was wonderfully successful, which touched the innumerable nerves of self-interest, local or sect pride, prejudice, superstition, and the like, which lie thick beneath the surface of civilized society. The Jews resented it as a heresy. The heathen looked upon it with suspicion, or contempt, as a corruption of Judaism. To men of the world, generally, its condemnation of tolerated sins and its bold predictions of righteous judgment would present themselves in the light of *odium generis humani:* a gloomy antagonism to the reckless and jovial spirit of cultivated society.

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[2] Euseb. i. 13. The Letter of our Lord, preserved in the archives of Edessa, is supported by respectable testimony, but does not *look* genuine. It may, however, have been a verbal answer from our Lord, committed to writing from memory by some of the King's ministers. See also Evagrius, *Eccl. Hist.* iv. 27.

[3] Mosheim's argument to the contrary is founded on a very partial interpretation of a passage from Clement of Alexandria, and from Polycrates of Ephesus.

[4] *Sacra peregrina.*

*Accumulative force.*

All this is plain enough from that portion of Church history recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. In those simple narratives we see the rancor of the Jews awakened, not in Palestine only, but in every place of their dispersion, at the first indications of prosperity on the part of the Gospel, kindling into more furious hostility as the signs of success increased, and communicating itself like a sort of contagious frenzy to the better disposed Gentiles. But at the point where the inspired history ends, the state of the world is growing worse daily. The causes of persecution, whether in the Jewish or heathen world, were rapidly accumulating in overwhelming force.

*Madness of the Jews.*

From the reign of the Emperor Tiberius till the destruction of the Holy City, the Jews were becoming constantly more entangled in seditions, tumults, plots, and insurrectionary movements. They had chosen Barabbas instead of Christ; and every Barabbas who offered himself to them was hailed as a Messiah. The wanton tyranny of Caligula exasperated this spirit, by placing the abomination of idols in Jewish houses of worship. Hence riots and massacres, both in Egypt and Palestine.[5] The reign of Claudius, Caligula's successor, was marked by similar commotions; and in a disturbance that took place in Jerusalem, during the week of the Passover, more than twenty thousand persons are said to have been slain, or trampled to death. A famine of several years added to the sufferings of this period. When

A.D. 54–68.

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[5] Philo in *Flacc.*, etc.; Joseph. *Antiq.* xviii. 8.

Nero came to the throne, the sacred city and the whole of Palestine had fallen a prey to fanatical sects; and robber bands and assassins flourished under the guise of patriotism and religion. A glimpse is afforded us of this state of things, and of its effect upon the security of the Christians, in the account, given us in the Acts, of S. Paul's eventful visit to the sacred city of his people. Not long after, similar tumults arising, James of Jerusalem was put to death. This, again, was followed soon by the commencement of the Judaic war; in consequence of which, according to the testimony of Josephus,[6] a fearful commotion seized upon the populace throughout all Syria, and everywhere the inhabitants of the cities destroyed the Jews without mercy, so that the streets were strewn with unburied and naked corpses.

A.D. 65.

It was a time, in fact, of universal madness and misrule. Nero's tyranny was succeeded by the wilder, and still more bloody anarchy of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius. The page of the philosophic historian of the Romans is as black as that of the learned Jew, with the tragic record of treasons, plots, conspiracies, portents in the natural and civil world, horrible massacres, and a recklessness of human life passing all imagination. In Rome, where civil war was raging from street to street, the mob looked on and applauded, as at a gladiator show. "If any one hid in a house or shop, they shouted to the soldiers to drag him out, and slay him." For, as the historian[7] fearfully adds, "the military were so intent on carnage, that the greater part of the booty fell to the populace. There were all the horrors of a city taken by storm, with all the merriment and licentiousness of the most luxurious times of peace: battles and piles of corpses; eating-houses and baths; soldiers with bloody swords, harlots in flaunting dresses: all was so mixed up, that it would be difficult to say whether the city was in a fury, or on a frolic." Nor did the rural districts of Italy escape the common woe. "Every-

*Of the Heathen.*

A.D. 68–70.

*Rome.*

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[6] Quoted by Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 26.

[7] Tacit. *Hist.* iii. 83.

where there were rapes, robbery, and bloodshed; citizens dressed themselves as soldiers to assassinate their enemies; the soldiers seized everything they could lay hands on, without rebuke from their superiors. Italy was not merely exhausted, it was fairly trampled into ruin by the wantonness of foot and horse."[8] To add to the terrors of the times, the popular mind was haunted with prodigies and omens. "In the vestibule of the Capitol, Victory dropped her chariot-reins; from a cell of Juno's temple there came forth a gigantic spectre; on a serene and cloudless day, the statue of the Emperor Julius turned round and faced the East; an ox in Etruria opened its mouth and spake." Such stories, little heeded in times of peace, but at this period readily believed and circulated, show at least the state of the public mind. It was more remarkable, that real disasters, such as an unprecedented overflow of the Tiber, followed by a general famine, made less impression as calamities than as omens.[9] Every affliction cast a shadow still blacker than itself.

*Italy.*

*Prodigies and Omens.*

Under these circumstances, the fearful picture, drawn by the Jewish historian, of the horrors, portents, and calamities of his country, may be taken as a sample of the condition of the whole world. "No generation from the beginning of the world was more fruitful in wickedness. The misfortunes of the Jews were such, that the calamities of all men from the beginning of the world would be found slight in comparison with them." It was Gessius Florus, appointed Procurator in the tenth year of Nero, who by his cruelty and rapacity provoked them to rebellion against the Roman arms. The heathen of the various cities in which the Jews dwelt were encouraged to insult and harass them; and when outrages of this kind had excited them to insurrection, they were massacred in crowds, without pity or remorse. In this way thousands suffered in Ascalon, Cæsarea, Ptolemais, and in the cities of Syria and Egypt. Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, might have prevented the rebellion by measures of ordi-

*General Calamities.*

*Gessius Florus.*

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[8] Tacit. *Hist.* ii. 56.

[9] Tacit. *Hist.* i. 86.

nary prudence and justice; or when it began might easily have crushed it in the bud. He did neither. His course was vigorous enough to increase the exasperation, but too dilatory to lead to any result. A feeble attempt to take Jerusalem was followed by a precipitate retreat, which degenerated into a flight and a panic. The Jews hung upon his rear, slew his best troops, and, elated by this easy triumph, carried on the war thenceforward in a spirit of desperation that hardly fell short of madness. For seven years society was completely disorganized. It was a conflict unillumined by a ray of hope. Suicide was preferred to submission to the Romans. Yet submission to the Romans was felt to be a far less evil than the triumph of the robbers and assassins, by whom, for the most part, the cause of rebellion was sustained. In short, the prophecy of our Lord was fulfilled to the letter.[10] Things came to such a pass in the end, that unless those days of mutual extermination had been mercifully shortened, no flesh would have been left alive.

*First Siege of Jerusalem,* A.D. 65.

That terrible period, then, which is best described as the coming of our Lord in judgment upon the Jews—the sixth in order of those tremendous epochs which prefigure the final Judgment[11]—was a time in which it was not only natural that the shepherds of the Flock should be smitten, but equally natural that the Flock should be too much dis-

*The Lord's coming.*

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[10] S. Matt. xxiv. 22. The remarkable coincidences, between the prophecy of our Lord and the language of Josephus in his account of the Judaic War, are well pointed out in "the Plain Commentary on the Four Holy Gospels."

[11] In the xxivth of S. Matthew, etc. The Judgment of Jerusalem, of Sodom, of the Flood, etc., all lead the mind forward to the final consummation. The six judgments are, the Expulsion from Paradise, the Flood, the Destruction of Sodom, the Drowning of Pharaoh, the Ruin of Solomon's Temple, and the final destruction of Jerusalem, with the Abrogation of the Jewish Polity. For many useful suggestions on this subject see Jarvis's *Church of the Redeemed.* Dr. Jarvis, however, divides the history of the world before the Christian era into *five* periods, including the day in Paradise in the period which terminates with the flood.

turbed to keep a careful record of the calamitous visitation. Christians were hated by the Jews, and equally hated as connected with the Jews. They were a ready and safe mark for private and public malice. And of the Roman magistrates in those days, while some might temporize like Pilate, some like Gallio might behave with a disdainful impartiality, and a few like Pliny might feel disposed to pity the oppressed: the great majority, no doubt, would easily give way to the outcry of the rabble. In the confusion that thus ensued, we can find the only satisfactory explanation of the vagueness of Church tradition, with regard to the latter days of most of the Apostles.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JEWISH CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

*Jerusalem and Christian Israel.*

JERUSALEM continued, till the time of the great Judgment upon that city, to be the centre of Apostolic conference and communion; the centre especially of that Christian Israel "scattered abroad," which, though absorbed in the one name of Judah, was the Historical continuation of all the twelve tribes,[1] and was tolerated in the observance of Mosaic rites.

*James the Just.*

James, the universally respected head of this great stock, was eminently fitted for his peculiar and difficult position. He is said to have been consecrated to God from his birth, after the manner of the ancient Nazarites, and to have lived the life of a genuine ascetic. Foreseeing the judgments that were coming on his guilty nation, and wrestling continually in prayer for their conversion, he acquired among them the title of *Zaddick,* the Just, or *Ophlias,* the Bulwark of the People. His appointment to the Bishopric of Jerusalem is attributed by some to our Lord himself. It is certain that he was admitted to the honor of a special interview with his Master, after the Resurrection.[2]

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[1] James, i. 1.

*His relations to S. Paul.*

As head of the Circumcision, "myriads" of whom had been converted before the last visit of S. Paul to Jerusalem,[3] he was naturally exposed to the temptation of forming a party, or separate school, in the Church. There is no proof, however, that he yielded to this temptation. On the contrary, his relations to the Apostles of the Gentiles seem ever to have been of the most friendly kind. S. Paul evidently regarded him with reverence and affection. James, in his turn, not only gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, but in reference to the questions mooted by the Judaizing faction, expressed himself with a firmness and decision[4] not inferior to that of the great Apostle himself.

*To his own People.*

And towards those of his own kin who had not as yet received the Gospel he acted, there is reason to believe, with a wise and charitable and Christian-like forbearance. He avoided everything calculated to excite the prejudices of the Jews. Those who visited Jerusalem from among the Gentile Churches were required to observe the same rule.[5]

*His Epistle.*

It may have been owing to this habit of noble as well as politic forbearance, that the Epistle of S. James, addressed as it is to the twelve tribes, and almost ignoring the difference between Jew and Christian, is so extremely reserved on the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel. With the Lord nigh at hand, with the Judge standing before the door,[6] and with a profound fellow-feeling for the difficulties and perplexities of the Jewish mind, the earnest and sober-minded Pastor may have felt that the orthodoxy needed for the conversion of his countrymen was that of the heart and life, rather than of the head. Of faith,[7] in the form of dogmatism, the Synagogue, whether Jewish or Jewish-Christian, had enough and to spare. The Name of Christ might easily become, like the name of Moses, a mere symbol of lip-worship, a mere rallying-cry for the strife of tongues. In the bitterness of controversy, "that worthy name" might possibly be taken in vain.[8] Rather than incur such a risk, let the yea of faith be yea, and the nay simply nay. Christ is not confessed by vigorous asseverations. He is not heard in strife. In peace the fruits of righteousness are sown. The dew of Divine wisdom distils from a tranquil sky.[9] In a community occupying so critical a position, standing, as it were, between a doomed nation and a Judge near at hand, patience should be allowed to have her perfect work. The husbandman waiteth for the rain. Job waited for the end, and prayed for the friends who vexed him. Elias, a man like other men, a great and fiery heart full of passionate aches and yearnings, waited and prayed for rain; and the rain came at his request, and the parched earth yielded fruit. Such prayer, such patience, might still be found availing. The sinner might yet be converted from the error of his ways.[10] With the tenderness, then, of that mother, who won her child from the precipice, not by warning cries, but by a silent act of instinctive maternal love,[11] James yearned for the salvation of all Israel; and in his solicitude spoke with bated breath, lest the sharp distinctive word might startle them into madness, and so precipitate their ruin.

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[2] 1 Cor. xv. 7.

[3] Acts, xxi. 20.

[4] Acts, xv. 13–21.

[5] Acts, xxi. 17–26.

[6] James, v. 7–9.

*Christ not heard in Strife.*

*The Prayer of Faith.*

Such seems to have been the spirit of Judaic Christianity, in its better aspect. It was the religion of intercession; the embodiment of the Divine heart's desire that all Israel should be saved. It was the living continuation of the prayer of Jesus on the Cross. While Gentile Christianity, bold, free, and full of joy, was advancing Joshua-like in

*The Spirit of Judaic Christianity.*

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[7] James, ii. 14–26.

[8] James, ii. 7; v. 12.

[9] James, iii. 13–18.

[10] James, v. 7–20.

[11] Greek Anthology, alluded to in Keble's *Christian Year*—"Commination."

the line of spiritual aggression, Jerusalem, like Moses, was content with an humbler posture. She prayed for the victory which freer hands achieved.

The end of James, as related by the most ancient of Church Historians,[12] accords entirely with this view of his character and position.

*The end of James,* A.D. 63.

Advantage was taken of the temporary anarchy that followed the death of Festus the Roman governor to stir up a tumult against the Christians. In the midst of the excitement some of the Sadducees addressed themselves to James. "Tell us," said they, "who is Jesus?"[13] He answered, "The Saviour." Thereupon many of the Jews believed, both among the rulers and among the common people. But the Scribes and Pharisees, alarmed at the growing expectation of a speedy advent of Jesus in judgment upon their nation, determined to appeal to James's conservative and patriotic feelings. "We entreat thee, restrain the people who are led astray after Jesus, as if He were the Messiah!" Then, conducting him to a conspicuous place on one of the wings of the Temple, they asked him the same question that the Sadducees had put to him before: "O Zaddick, declare to us, What is the door of Jesus, the crucified!" He answered, "Why do ye ask me respecting Jesus the son of Man? He is now sitting in the heavens, on the right hand of Power, and is about to come on the clouds of Heaven." Thereupon many of the people cried out, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" But others came behind him, and cast him down from the Temple; and as he raised himself, and knelt, repeating for the last time

*His Confession.*

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[12] *Hegesippus*: Euseb. ii. 23.

[13] Eusebius has it, "What is *the door* of Jesus?" A manifest allusion to a common Christian phrase, but difficult to reconcile with James's answer. Mosheim and others have supposed that Eusebius has mistranslated his authority, and various readings are suggested. Without choosing among these conjectures, it may be remarked, that the vivid expectation of the Lord's coming speedily in judgment, doubtless made such phrases, *e. g.*, "the Judge is at *the door*," more current than usual, and a desire to know the meaning of these phrases may have suggested the peculiar form of the question.

that prayer of his Master, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," he was cruelly despatched with clubs and stones.

He died, as he had lived, a patriot saint. The people knew this to be his character, and his martyrdom was spoken of among them as a public calamity. He was buried with honor near the Temple, and a pillar marked the place of his death.

*Honor paid to him.*

The remorse of the Jews was increased by the signs of coming wrath which at that time began to thicken around the mother city, and to prepare the minds of the inhabitants for some terrible event.

*Signs of Judgment.*

It was about this time, for example, that one Jesus, the son of Ananias, began to harrow men's souls with that terrible cry of *Woe*, which resounded for so many years through the streets and along the walls of the devoted city. With this were many other signs of a similar description. A fiery sword was seen waving in the air; embattled hosts appeared to be contending in the sky; the East gate of the Temple swung open of itself, and voices were heard crying, let us go hence! In short, men's hearts were failing them for fear, and the popular mind was haunted with gloomy presentiments of impending judgment.[14]

*Warnings.*

After the death of James, Symeon, a son of Cleophas and a cousin of the Lord, was, for that reason perhaps, elected in his place. Down to that time the Jewish Christian Church, though somewhat degenerated[15] from its purity and simplicity, had remained, as the ancients expressed it, a virgin in the faith. Now the seeds of heresy began to spring up. One Thibutis, a disappointed candidate for the office of Bishop, became the ringleader of a faction. The bias that existed towards low and fleshly views of the nature of the Messiah, the naturally disputatious and ration-

*Successors of James.*

*Seeds of Heresy.*

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[14] Tacitus and Josephus both mention these signs.

[15] The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of S. James show that this degeneracy had begun.

alistic turn of the Jewish mind, the disturbances that would necessarily arise from the gradual discontinuance of Mosaic rites on the part of the more enlightened, the general madness of the times, and last not least, the increasing isolation of Judaic Christianity, were so many seeds, as it were, of discord and dissension; so that the spirit of faction having once secured an entrance, every sort of error found in the divided flock its appropriate prey.

*Jewish war.*

*Jerusalem taken,* A.D. 70 *or* 72.

In the meantime, however, the woes denounced so long beforehand against Jerusalem had come to a head. Seven years of rebellion against the Romans, attended with atrocities of every imaginable description, had only exasperated the intense hatred with which the foreign yoke was regarded. Finally, the city was besieged by Titus, whose father Vespasian had been called from the leadership in Judæa to the empire of the world; and after a mad struggle, unparalleled in the history of human wickedness and misery, it was taken and destroyed. The Temple was demolished. Such of the inhabitants as survived the horrors of the siege were sold for slaves, and scattered once more among the nations.

*Christians retire to Pella,* A.D. 65.

*Conversions.*

The Christian Jews alone escaped the common fate. Remembering the predictions and commandment of the Lord, they had taken advantage of a lull in the storm of war, just after the first siege of the city and the repulse of the Roman army under Cestius Gallus,[16] and had withdrawn in a body to Pella, a city of Decapolis. There many of them remained, continuing the observance of Mosaic rites. Others returned, and dwelt, a sad flock, among the ruins of the city. In a subsequent persecution under Trajan, Symeon their Bishop received the crown of martyrdom; and Justus, after a factious opposition, was elected in his place. About the same time many thousands of the Jews were converted. The terror and the ruin which dogged them everywhere, must have added force in the minds of the more devout, to the arguments and claims of Christianity.

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[16] Josephus mentions, that "after the calamity of Cestius, many of the most illustrious Jews departed from the city as from a sinking ship." Jos. *De Bell. Judaic.*

*Jewish Bishops.*

Justus died early in the second century, and was followed by a rapid succession of twelve Bishops, whose brief episcopates have led to the supposition of a violent persecution during that period. It may have been, that in choosing their chief pastors the Jewish Christians attached an undue importance to age, and to fleshly connection with the house of David. Their spiritual rulers, therefore, were in all probability more venerable than efficient.

*Mission of Judaism ended.*

In fact, Judaic Christianity had already accomplished its mission in the world. Its peculiar rites, tolerated by the Apostles on the principle that "what decayeth and waxeth old is *ready to vanish away*," had lost all warrant for their continuance from the time that the Divine judgment had gone forth against Jerusalem and the Temple. Forty years[17] God had spoken to the Jews in their own tongue, as it were. Forty years He had waited for their repentance. To persevere longer in a system unfavorable to the free spirit of the Gospel, would only separate the Hebrews from their brethren of Christendom at large, and subject them to the dwarfing and deadening influence of sect and party feeling.

*Nazarenes, Ebionites, Sampsæans.*

It is probable that this truth dawned but gradually on the minds of the Hebrew Christians. Being recognized by some, and more or less repudiated by others, it proved the occasion, as it were, of a new sifting of the nation. The strict Judaizers separated by degrees from their larger-minded brethren. A sect of Nazarenes arose, legalists and purists of the narrowest kind. The Ebionites, more actively rationalistic, adhered to the law, rejected the Divinity of Christ, and covered the nakedness of their unbelief with shreds of Gnostic speculation. The Sampsæans fell back upon a supposed primitive Jacobite tradition. These, and perhaps many other obscure sects, sprang in course of time from the now cold and sluggish blood of Judaic Christianity.

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[17] Our Lord's ministry began about the year 30; the destruction of the Temple was in the year 70 or 72, on the same day of the week and month on which Nebuchadnezzar had burnt the former temple. Many other coincidences, manifestly showing that Judaism had come to an end, are to be found in Dr. Jarvis's *Church of the Redeemed;* also in Foulkes's *Man. of Ec. Hist.*

*Second overthrow*, A.D. 135.

The deliverance of the mother Church of Christendom from influences of this kind seems to have been consummated by the second, and, so far as the Circumcision was concerned, decisive overthrow of the sacred city.

*Bar Cochba.*

The Emperor Hadrian, provoked by the long series of rebellions, which the infatuated Jews continued to renew; provoked especially by the insurrection of Bar Cochba, that baleful "son of a star," whose claims to the Messiahship had to be quenched in the blood of hundreds of thousands of his countrymen: destroyed whatever remains were left of the Jewish metropolis; and built upon its site a Gentile colony under the name of Ælia Capitolina, forbidding the Jews and everything Jewish to enter its walls any more.[18]

*Gentile Succession*, A.D. 135.

From that time forth, the Jewish Christians, under Marcus, a Bishop of Gentile extraction, the sixteenth from S. James in order of descent, became a homogeneous portion of the mass of Catholic believers; and Jerusalem, or Ælia, recovered something of its pristine glory, as one of the principal Apostolic Sees.

Of those who refused to conform to the new order of things, the greater part were absorbed in Gnostic or Ebionite sects.

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[18] Sulpicius Severus, quoted and discussed by Mosheim, *Comm.* xxviii. 1.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### S. PETER.—S. MARK.—S. CLEMENT.

S. Peter's labors are sufficiently well known to show the fulfilment of the promises made to Him by our Lord, but beyond that point are matter of conjecture only. Being the first to confess the Divinity of Christ, he became the first stone[1] in the spiritual foundation of the Church. He held the keys, and was not slow to use them, by which the door of the kingdom was opened to the three great divisions of the human race. To the Jews in Jerusalem, to the Samaritans in Samaria, and to the Gentiles in Cæsarea, these cities being the centres respectively of the three races in Palestine, he was foremost in giving the seal of sonship and adoption. Finally, having resided for awhile in Cæsarea and Antioch, and having labored, perhaps, in the countries mentioned in his first Epistle, he closed his career in Rome in company with S. Paul. He was crucified, it is said, with his head downward.

*S. Peter's position.*

*His use of the Keys.*

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[1] S. Matt. xvi. 17–19; Peter is *Petros*, not Petra: a distinction not to be overthrown by any *supposed* Aramaic original used by our Lord. Whatever word our Lord may have used, the Greek of the New Testament is the language of the Holy Ghost; and the Holy Ghost came as the Interpreter of the words of our Lord. If the Holy Ghost, therefore, calls Simon *Petros*, and the Rock on which the Church was built *Petra*, we ought to adhere to the distinction. While on this subject, I may remark that the Rock seems to be the Scripture symbol of the Divinity, and the Stone, of the Humanity of our Lord. The Church, of course, was founded on both. *The keys* are by many regarded as synonymous with the power of *binding and loosing*. It seems more natural to apply the figure to the first *admission* to the Church; especially as that admission was accompanied in Samaria and Jerusalem by two terrible examples of *exclusion*. This primary application, however, does not preclude the other and more common sense.

The account given by Eusebius of a supposed visit to Rome, just after the conversion of Cornelius, is liable to objection, not only from the silence of the Acts and of the Epistle to the Romans, but from the over close resemblance between this alleged visit and that which took place at a later period; an encounter with Simon Magus being common to both occasions. Nothing is more natural in tradition than to make two events out of two accounts of one and the same event.

*His Visits to Rome.*

His travels being much in the direction of S. Paul's—to Cæsarea, Antioch, the countries mentioned in his first Epistle, possibly Corinth, possibly Babylon in Egypt, and more certainly Rome—he seems, according to an understanding with that Apostle, to have addressed himself mainly to the Hebrews, or "strangers scattered abroad."[2] Hence, in establishing the Episcopate in Antioch and Rome, S. Paul and he are said to have acted in concert. In the former city Euodius and Ignatius were appointed the first Bishops,—Euodius over the Jewish, and Ignatius over the Gentile converts:[3] the two races, it is supposed, remaining for awhile distinct in their places and modes of worship. Afterwards, in that great frenzy of expiring Judaism which extended to all parts of the Roman world, Euodius was slain in an outbreak of the Heathen against the Jews; and his separate charge, abandoning their peculiarities, became under Ignatius an homogeneous portion of the now united flock. Similar events may have taken place in Rome. It must be confessed, however, that

*His Travels.*

*Bishoprics founded.*

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[2] 1 Peter, i. The Epistle is written for Gentile Christians (ii. 10): but the style of address shows that S. Peter regarded them from the Judaic point of view—as sojourners, strangers scattered abroad, etc.

[3] Such is the conjecture of Baronius, following the assertion of the Apostolic Constitutions; though the fact of *more than one Bishop* appointed to a city may be as well or better explained by that *collegiate* principle on which the Apostles so often acted. It might be also, that in a troublous period, when synods could not be held, and Bishops could not assemble from different cities, it would be thought best to secure a sort of synodal action by having two, or three, or more Bishops in each of the great centres. See Book II. chap. x.

the ultimate fusion of the Jew and Gentile Churches is one of the obscurest points in early Church history.

*His Gift pastoral.*

S. Peter's character, and there is solid reason to believe his "gift," or peculiar work, were eminently pastoral.[4] His natural impulsiveness, his proneness to precipitous extremes, and, above all, the affectionateness of his disposition, made him, when disciplined by grace, the more capable of sympathizing largely with men of every sort, and of distinguishing complementary opposites from those really antagonistic and irreconcilable. In this respect his threefold denial may have been as useful to him as his threefold confession. Having experienced that infirmity of "amazement"[5] to which the "lambs" are liable, he was the better able to have compassion for it. Having needed strengthening himself, he was the more ready to "strengthen the brethren." It is remarkable, however, that the latest inspired record of this great Apostle exhibits him in his weakness, rather than in his strength. When he first went to Antioch,[6] he showed his appreciation of the grace given to the Gentiles, and of their entire equality with the Jews, by freely eating with them; but afterwards, yielding to the urgency of the Judaizing party, he withdrew from this position, and exposed himself thereby to the censure of S. Paul. Of the events of his later life even tradition says little. From his second Epistle we gather that, like S. Paul, he was forewarned of the approach of death,[7] and saw the fiery trials that were coming upon the Church. It is equally certain that he did what in him lay to provide for all emergencies. That he was ever Bishop of Antioch and Rome, in the strict sense of the word,[8] is warranted by

*His Strength and Weakness.*

*Censured by S. Paul.*

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[4] John, xxi. 15–17. It seems to me characteristic of the two Apostles, that S. Paul calls our Lord "the Apostle and High Priest of our Profession," but S. Peter entitles Him "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

[5] 1 Peter, iii. 6. [6] Gal. ii. 11. [7] 2 Peter, i. 14.

[8] The claim that he was seven years Bishop of Antioch, and twenty or twenty-five years Bishop of Rome, involves chronological and other difficulties without number. See Barrow on the *Pope's Supremacy*. Tillemont (*Mé-*

no reliable testimony of the early Church; but that he and S. Paul appointed the first Bishops of those cities seems to have been generally admitted.

*His Wife.*

S. Peter was a married man; and his "company," as may be inferred from a passage of S. Paul, was graced by those genial influences of domestic life which the Jews, in travelling, were more accustomed than the heathen to "lead about" with them.[9] His most intimate associates were first S. John, afterwards S. James of Jerusalem, S. Barnabas, and finally S. Paul.

*S. Mark.*

S. Mark the Evangelist, his chosen "Son," or Disciple, he sent to Alexandria, where, after preaching the Gospel in various parts of Egypt, he established the "Evangelic See," and left Annianus Bishop.

*S. Clement.*

S. Clement of Rome, left as Bishop of that See with Linus and Cletus, became sole Pastor after the death of these two, and is the author of the only uninspired record now extant of the Church in the first century.

*Epistle to the Corinthians.*

*All things subject to Law.*

It is a fraternal Epistle from the Church of Rome to that of Corinth, occasioned by a factious attempt in the latter city to depose certain Presbyters from their office. Hence the letter is largely occupied with questions of Church order. The writer sees a law of harmony and proportion in all the works of God. Sun and moon, earth and stars, the tides of the sea, the seasons of the year, the shifting winds, the overflowing fountains, and all the innumerable tribes of living creatures, move freely, but harmoniously, in the order that God has foreordained and unalterably established. The same principle must apply to God's spiritual kingdom. His worship is not to be left to fancy or caprice. His word is not to be divided by all men alike. The Chief

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*moires, etc.*), in his endeavor to reconcile this claim with facts, shows his embarrassment at every step. Tom. i. part 2.

[9] 1 Cor. ix. 5. Peter's wife, tradition says, was a worthy helpmeet. When summoned "to go home" by the path of martyrdom, she obeyed the summons with joy. Euseb. iii. 30; Clem. Alex. *Stromat.* vii.

Priest has his proper office; the Priests theirs; the Levites theirs; and the Layman is called to the work of legitimate lay service. All are not Prefects; all are not Chiliarchs; all are not Centurions. Each has his vocation, each his appointed place. It remains, therefore, for each to attend to his own business in that particular station to which it hath pleased God to call him. This, with many charitable exhortations, is the sum of the Saint's counsel to the turbulent Corinthians; a counsel so highly appreciated in those times that the sedition was appeased, and the Epistle was for a long while read publicly in the Churches, with a respect hardly inferior to that paid to the Canon of Inspiration.

*Questions of order, how settled.*

This admirable Letter, like the Pastoral Epistles of S. Paul, serves to mark that crisis in Church History when questions of order, naturally postponed in the first effusion of Pentecostal life, had to be considered and deliberately settled. The Churchman, the Bishop, the Divine, is now taking the place of the Evangelist or Apostle. The Tabernacle once reared by the first Preachers, it devolves upon their successors to drive the stakes and stretch the cords. With Clement in Rome, John in Ephesus, Ignatius in Antioch, Symeon in Jerusalem, and Annianus in Alexandria, to superintend the work, there is every assurance that it was done well and wisely; so that God was the author of the order, as well as of the doctrine, which, on the lifting of the curtain of the second great Act of the Church's history, we find to be everywhere prevailing, and everywhere the same.

## CHAPTER IX.

### S. JOHN.

*S. John the survivor of the Apostolic College.*

S. John, the beloved disciple, differed from his brethren in this respect, that his main work seems to have begun about the time that they were summoned to their rest. For his peculiar mission he had to tarry, as it were, until the Lord came.[1] His influence was reserved for the generation that came after the doom of the Holy City.

*Removes to Asia Proper.*

*Rome.*

*Patmos, A.D. 96.*

*Ephesus.*

Soon after the martyrdom of S. Peter and S. Paul, he removed to Asia Proper, a field in which the wheat was already mingled with the tares of pernicious speculations. He afterwards visited Rome, and in the persecution under Domitian, was banished to the Isle of Patmos. On the accession of Nerva, he returned to Asia, and, at the request of the Bishops of that Province, assumed the Episcopate of Ephesus, which then lay vacant. There he quietly awaited the time of his departure, confining his preaching, it is said, to the simple exhortation, "Little children, love one another!" Towards the end of his life he was so infirm that he had to be carried into church.[2]

*His Character. Son of Thunder.*

Judging from the traditions of this period of his life, John continued still to be a Son of Thunder,—the thunder not the less terrible, that it came from a cloudless sky. Less demonstrative than Peter, and with less sympathy, perhaps, for commonplace passions and infirmities, he loved the Divine Word with an intense and contemplative devotion; and "the brethren" he loved, as idealized in Him, as shielded by His luminous presence from all contact or approach of the Evil One. To him God was Light, without a shade of Darkness. There was no middle ground in his view, no shading, no perspective. His eagle eye knew no such thing as twilight. He loved the Truth, and hated lies. Half-truths, half-lies, or half-love for either, had no place in his conceptions.

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[1] S. John, xxi. 22.

[2] Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iii. 18, 23, 24, 31; v. 24, Clemens Alexandr. *Quis Dives Salvus?* 42.

*Suited to a particular Crisis.*

Such a character is too pure and single, too inward and upward-looking, for ordinary occasions. It needs a special crisis to draw it out from its luminous sphere. When the moral atmosphere becomes lethargic and pestilential, so that a new and quickening power is imperatively demanded, then is the time for the Sons of Thunder to awake. At other times sheathed in imperturbable serenity, they know not themselves what spirit they are of, and are still less open to superficial observers.

*His brother James an early Martyr.*

It is highly probable that the early death of James, the elder of the two brothers, was occasioned by some lightning-burst of zeal thus specially awakened. Herod had James summarily beheaded; but Simon Peter, a more prominent, and ordinarily a more impetuous leader, he was content to cast into prison. The Son of Thunder, it is likely, had in some way or other touched the tyrant to the quick.

*Traditions.*

*Cerinthus.*

*Young Disciple.*

Of the younger son of Zebedee, two acts remain to show that the spirit which would call down fire from heaven upon the heads of the Samaritans, was rather chastened than extinguished by the power of Divine grace. On one occasion he fled with horror from a public bath, because the heretic Cerinthus happened to be there. No house could stand that harbored an enemy of the Truth! At another time he had entrusted a youthful convert to the pastoral care of a certain Bishop not far from Ephesus. The youth fell away, and became a leader of banditti. When John heard of it, he smote his head, rent his clothes, and having vehemently rebuked the remissness of the Shepherd, went himself among the robbers in quest of the lost sheep. His yearning love was wonderfully rewarded. He brought back the youth a penitent, and restored him to the Church.

*His Influence Anti-gnostic.*

With love such as this, tempered by God's grace and sheathed ordinarily in a serenity of character, childlike, affectionate, equable, and profound, S. John was the man of all others to cope with those "grievous wolves," the theosophic heresies of the last quarter of the century, whose approach S. Paul had so solemnly predicted to the Ephesian shepherds.[3] He had the eagle eye to discern the spoiler from afar; the sudden swoop of the eagle to strike him down. His intuitive quickness of perception, united as it was to a soaring imagination and a virgin heart, qualified him not only to bring out a true Christian *gnosis* face to face with the false gnosis[4] of the heretic, but to array it in a garb of majestic simplicity and beauty. The demonstration of this power was reserved for a time of peculiar peril to the Faith. At a period when Christianity was becoming an object of theoretic scrutiny, when a speculative and highly imaginative philosophy was displaying its gorgeous hues before the eyes of the refined and sensitive Greeks of Asia Minor, and when every lie found it necessary to assume a profoundly mystic and religious shape, then and there was the true sphere found of the Apostolic Divine and Prophet. His utterances, childlike, clear as crystal, but with much of that "terrible crystal" which in Ezekiel's vision overarches the canopy of heaven, were admirably adapted to such a state of things.

*Christian Gnosis.*

*His Style.*

*Apostle of Love.*

In other respects, also, S. John merited his title as the Apostle of Love. For, as love is the bond of all perfectness, the complement of all virtues, and the fulfilling of all law, it would seem to have been the privilege of the beloved Disciple to give the last finish to the foundation work of his brethren; and as Apostle, Prophet, Doctor, Evangelist, and Pastor, to supply whatever might be lacking in the organization, or whatever might be desirable for the strength and beauty, of the Church.

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[3] Acts, xx. 29, 30.

[4] "Oppositions of *science* falsely so called." 1 Tim. vi. 20.

*His Gospel, Epistles, Revelation.*

His Gospel, written late in life, is the key-stone, as it were, of evangelic history. His Epistles are eminently an *epitome*, or summary, or rather a kind of sublimated essence, of the Faith. His Revelation, in like manner, contains the substance of all prophecy: its gorgeous visions gathering like many-colored clouds around the sunset of inspiration, blending in one harmonious whole the glories of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and illumining the entire field of the Church's conflicts to the end of time.

*Import of his Later Life.*

Considering the peculiarities of his character and position, there is inherent probability in the story, that he set his seal, as it were, to the three Gospels of his predecessors, and perhaps to the whole Canon of inspiration. Living thirty years within the region to which most of the Epistles are addressed, he could hardly have been unacquainted with them. One of the four great Liturgies is ascribed to him,[5] at least in its germ, or outline. His name is associated also with the Asiatic custom of observing the Jewish Pascha. Without laying undue stress upon particulars of this kind, there was doubtless a special Providence in his long and peaceful residence among the Churches of Asia. The second generation is always a critical period in the history of religious bodies. The first love passing away, there follows a season of lukewarmness, or of alternate heats and chills. Heresies begin to show themselves, schisms are engendered. The most trivial differences of opinion fester and gangrene into causes of separation. That the Church, so widely diffused, so heterogeneous in materials, moving in such a chaos of opinions and amid such scenes of religious and civil strife, as the world at that time presented, should not only have passed this critical stage of her existence without serious loss, but should have presented at its close a spectacle of unity and uniformity which has been the wonder of all ages, must be ascribed in the first place to an overruling wisdom unfathomable to man; and in the second place to S. John, as the chief of the chosen instruments employed by that wisdom. "Little children, love one another," was not with him a mere word of exhortation. It was the symbol of a great power of discipline and order. It was the dove-like spirit of a holy conservatism. For thirty years in the person of S. John, and for nearly a hundred years in him and his noble contemporaries who overlived him, the same spirit pervaded the Province of Asia; and from that living and loving centre was communicated to the Churches in all quarters of the world.

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[5] Palmer, *Origines Liturgicæ*. Polycrates (*apud Euseb.*) mentions that he wore the "*petalon* of high-priest." The title, the Elder or Presbyter, that S. John applies to himself in his second and third Epistles, may indicate that his "gift," or particular vocation, lay in the quiet duties of the sanctuary, rather than in the more stirring life of a missionary Apostle. It was S. Paul's "gift" to lay the foundation; it may have been equally S. John's to build upon foundations already laid. The term "Presbyter," however, as used by S. John, seems to stand for high position of any kind ("the four and twenty Elders," for example), and not for Presbyters in the restricted sense. Neander concludes from its use in the two Epistles, that they were not written by John the Apostle, but by some Presbyter of that name. He seems not to notice the force of the definite article. It is not *a* Presbyter or Elder, but *the* Elder; evidently pointing to some one person, to whom alone that designation could apply.

*Second Generation critical.*

*Unity of the Church.*

*Especially in Asia.*

The persecution under Domitian, commonly reckoned as the second of the general persecutions, in which S. John was banished to Patmos, having escaped unhurt, as the story goes, from a caldron of boiling oil,[6] was general rather in the wide alarm it caused, than either in its severity or duration. It seems, in fact, to have been nothing more than one of the tyrant's innumerable caprices. His

*Second General Persecution,* A.D. 95.

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[6] This story is mentioned by Tertullian. Whatever the testimony may be worth, one can readily imagine that S. John's peculiar phrase, "an unction from the Holy One," might suggest just such a punishment to the cruel and frivolous mind of a tyrant like Domitian. Tertull. *De Præscript. Hæreticor.* 36.

jealousy of everything noble and illustrious had been excited by a rumor of certain descendants of King David being yet alive in some part of Judæa. When he found, however, that these were simple and poor men, his anger against the Christians ceased, or was diverted into other channels.

## CHAPTER X.

### HOLY WOMEN.

*Holy Women in Tradition and History.*

THE high position held by woman, both in the Gospels and in the Acts, would render the story of this century incomplete, if at least some allusion were not made to those who may be called the first heroines of Christianity. With regard to them, however, History has proved less mindful than Inspiration and Tradition. Inspiration has preserved their names. Tradition has fondly embellished them with beautiful though inconsistent traits. To History nothing is left but the ungrateful task of confessing how little is known about them; little, at all events, beyond the pregnant hints given in the New Testament.

*The Mother of our Lord.*

S. Mary, the Mother of our Lord, was committed by Him to the care of the beloved Disciple; and with him she remained, probably, till summoned to her rest. We see her first as a devout and holy Virgin, receiving in simple but thoughtful faith the wonderful message of the Angel; then as a matron and mother, sympathizing readily with the household cares of her friends,[1] and anxious for her Son, on one occasion with sorrowful solicitude,[2] and on another with a shade of natural misgiving;[3] then, as one of the few who stood beside His Cross; and, lastly, as a widow, without children or others near of kin to whom she could be confided, left therefore to the

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[1] S. John, ii. 3.

[2] S. Luke, ii. 48.

[3] S. Mark, iii. 21, 31.

care of the virgin Disciple,[4] and engaged with the other women. and with the Apostles and Disciples, in the daily worship of the Church. Within these limits her history is clear, and her character stands out in singular perfection of womanly dignity and beauty. But all before, and all after, Inspiration has left in doubt. With a sacred reserve in which one can hardly fail to see a lesson, only that short segment of her existence is made visible to posterity, in which she vouches, as it were, for the real and perfect Humanity of her blessed and only Son.

*Reserve of Scripture.*

Tradition, or, as seems more probable, heretical invention,[5] endeavored in later times to fill this blank. Joachim and Anna, a blameless pair, were both well stricken in years, and unblest with offspring; for which, however, they continued to pray without ceasing. The latter, on one occasion, in the fervor of her petitions, dared to go within the Holy of Holies, which the high-priest alone is allowed to enter. There her prayer was granted; and an Angel, at the same moment, announced the good news to Joachim, then far away in the desert. To this some heretics added, that the birth of the Virgin was as immaculate and miraculous as her conception had been. It was more generally believed, on similar authority, that she lived secluded in the Temple from her third to her fourteenth year, and devoted herself to a life of voluntary virginity. In the same way, while some have supposed, on the authority of a passage of doubtful meaning in the Acts of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, that she died and was buried

*Legends and Traditions.*

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[4] Her being thus left to John is fatal to the weak argument made by Neander and some others, in favor of the theory that James of Jerusalem was her son. James survived, till just before the Judaic war; his brothers (as we learn from Hegesippus in Eusebius) were still alive, as eminent Christian men, and landowners, though not rich, towards the end of the century. All of these, leading a quiet and stationary life among their own kin, were in a better position to take care of her, had she been their mother, than John could have been.

[5] These stories were of Gnostic or Ebionite invention; many of the early sects pretending to a secret tradition unknown to the Catholic Church.

in that city, others have preferred the later legend, that she came to her end in Jerusalem, and after three, or, as some will have it, forty days, rose from the dead, and was *assumed*, soul and body, into heaven. But all these notions, and innumerable others of the same kind, are without the least show of historic foundation. They first saw the light in times long after the age of the Apostles; and it is universally acknowledged[6] that the writings in which they first appear are "utterly apocryphal and full of fables."

*Other Holy Women.*

The same is to be said of the stories concerning Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and other faithful women who ministered to our Lord. Of the Prophetesses, Deaconesses, Widows, and other devout handmaidens of the Lord mentioned in the Acts and the Epistles, the traditions are equally vague and unsatisfactory. If the legends connected with them have any value, it is merely that, as a dark and confused background, they bring into clearer light the dignity and simplicity of the Gospel Narratives.

*SS. Thecla and Domitilla.*

To the honored names recorded by Inspiration, Tradition has added a few, such as that of S. Thecla, the first female martyr; and that of Domitilla, a niece of the Emperor Domitian, and wife of Flavius Clemens his cousin, who, with a great number of others, was put to death for *Atheism and Jewish manners;* in other words, for the profession of Christianity.[7] Domitilla suffered exile for the Faith. S. Thecla, a maiden of Iconium, converted by S. Paul on his first visit to that region, devoted herself, it is said, to a life of virginity; left a luxurious home, breaking off her engagement to a noble youth; accompanied S. Paul in his travels; performed many wonders; and, after a miraculous deliverance from the beasts of the Roman Amphitheatre, seems to have died in peace. Her name, widely celebrated in the early Church, heads a long list of highly intellectual as well as holy women, to whom Christianity and virginity were pledges of a freedom,[8] which in heathen society was more or less denied them. Her acts, however, first written by a Presbyter of Asia Minor, whom S. John deposed on account of the many falsehoods contained in his book,[9] are manifestly entitled to little or no credit.

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[6] See Tillemont, Baronius, the Bollandists, *et al.* The caution with which Roman Catholic writers endeavor to sustain the credit of the tissue of wonders connected with the name of S. Mary, while demolishing the credit of the earliest witnesses to those wonders, is most remarkable. Tillemont's notes are particularly instructive. *Memoires pour Servir à l'Hist. Eccles.* tom. i.

[7] See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, etc., vol. i. ch. xvi.

*Virgins.*

## CHAPTER XI.

### CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

THAT all powers necessary for the establishment and subsequent government of the Church were committed in the first place to the Eleven, and afterwards to those who, either by election or by an immediate Divine call, were added to their number, there can be no reasonable question. These all were Apostles, or Legates of Him who is "the Apostle of our profession," the One *sent forth* by the Father, to be Prophet, Priest, and King. But the mission He had received from the Father, He gave in its fulness to them. The Apostles, therefore, were the ecumenical, catholic, perpetual Ministry. Collectively, they attended to matters of general concernment: individually, each had a charge,

*All powers given to Apostles*

*by the Apostle and High Priest.*

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[8] The preference given to virginity in the early Church tended to elevate woman in the social scale. She could marry, or not, of her own free choice. She was no longer an article to be disposed of, sometimes in infancy or childhood, by guardians or parents. It is remarkable how many of the female martyrs were virgins, who had refused to marry heathen husbands, to whom they had been thus betrothed.

[9] Tert. *De Bap.* 17; Hier. *De Vir. ill.* 7. It is S. Jerome only who mentions the name of S. John.

or field, the limits of which would be determined by mutual consent,[1] or on general principles of equity and convenience. In their relations to one another, they were "brothers," colleagues, peers. They called no man "father" on earth. According to the type of the old Theocracy, a "kingdom" was given to them; but the Head was to be invisible till the time of the final "appearing and kingdom" of Jesus Christ.

*Brothers, Colleagues, Peers.*

Such was the ministry, as called, and trained, and commissioned by our Lord himself. That it was to be the abiding Order, is seen, not only in the promise of perpetuity contained in the words, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world," but also in the fact that the term "Apostolic" has continued in all times and places to be one of the four "notes," or definitions, of the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."[2]

*The abiding Order.*

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[1] Gal. ii. 9; Rom. xv. 16.

[2] Among modern German writers on this subject, *Mosheim* acknowledges the early rise of Episcopacy, and is almost disposed to grant that James was Bishop of Jerusalem. He confounds Bishops, however, with *Diocesans* or *See-bishops;* forgetting that Bishops at large, missionary Bishops, etc., have existed in all ages. *Dr. Schaff* is entangled in the same error, and while he professes to give the arguments *pro* and *con*, he misstates the argument *for* Episcopacy, and so neutralizes its force. *Neander* denies altogether the existence of a *clerus*, or clerical order in the Apostolic Church. *Dr. Hase* starts from the point that "the Twelve Apostles at first regarded themselves as a perfected or exclusive college for the establishment of Christianity in the world"; but, in referring to the establishment they made in Jerusalem, omits all mention of James. In this way, he staves off Episcopacy till the times of S. Ignatius, and accounts for it (as some rationalists account for the existence of the world) "by the concurrent power of circumstances." *Gieseler* very fully grants the early establishment of Episcopacy in Jerusalem, in the person of James. *Thiersch* (the Irvingite) treats the subject as many Anglicans have done, except that on a very fine point (the position of S. John relatively to the seven angels) he builds up a theory of an Episcopacy of three orders, viz., Apostles, Angels, Bishops. *Rothe* makes Episcopacy to have been established by the Apostles in council, at the election of Symeon (Euseb. iii. 11). Other Germans have adopted different shades or mixtures of these various views. Among Anglican writers, I may mention Bilson's *Perpetual Divine Govern-*

*Apostolic Aids or Fellows.*

By calling the Seventy to the same ministry with the Twelve, though in a secondary capacity, our Lord established a seminary, as it were, for a second and larger growth of Apostolic leaders.[3] The name *Disciples* given to them implies that, while fulfilling a temporary mission as "prophets of the kingdom," they were in training and expectation of a more enduring office. Accordingly, from their ranks Matthias was elected to the vacant bishopric of Judas. Barnabas, also, was probably one of these. So, likewise, S. Luke, and many others afterwards called Apostles. In imitation of this system of a secondary Apostolate, we find in after times that each of the chief Apostles was accompanied in his labors by a chosen company of sons, disciples, brothers, colleagues, yoke-fellows, sometimes called Apostles or Messengers of the Churches, who held to their principals some such relation as Joshua to Moses, as Elisha to Elijah, as the sons of the prophets to the prophets, or as the Twelve more recently had held to our

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*ment* as a work less read than it deserves: also, among American authors, Onderdonk, *On Episcopacy*, Mines's *Presbyterian*, etc., Wilson, *Church Identified.* In the following chapter I have given (perhaps) more weight to the *collegiate principle* than is commonly conceded to it.

[3] Dr. Schaff sees in the calling of the Seventy a reference to the Gentiles; but arbitrarily distinguishes the secondary Apostles as *Evangelists.* Of the eight whom he so designates, not one is so called in the New Testament; while the term *apostles* (translated "messengers," Phil. ii. 25; 2 Cor. viii. 23) *of the Churches* is applied to many of S. Paul's companions. Timothy, in one place (2 Tim. iv. 5), is exhorted to do the work of an Evangelist. But this does not prove him to have been an Evangelist *only*, any more than Acts, xiii. 1, would prove Paul or Barnabas to have been "prophets" only. Dr. Schaff mentions Mark and Luke among his Evangelists—because, I suppose, they are commonly so called. But, on the same principle, he might have included Matthew and John. The truth is, the term Evangelist means simply one who had an extraordinary "gift" for preaching the Gospel, and in that sense S. Paul was the chief of Evangelists—but none the less, however, an Apostle in the full sense of the word. I may here remark, that in the 13th canon of Neo-Cæsarea (A.D. 315) the Village Bishops are said to be "in imitation of the LXX.," and therefore "fellow-officers in the same service" with the City Bishops.

Lord himself. Being endowed with special gifts—"Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers"—being designated in some cases by "prophecies going before," being employed in the larger fields of labor as Apostles of the Churches, being personally acquainted, moreover, with the Apostles' "doctrine, purpose, and manner of life," they were in some sense their disciples, or sons, but in another sense their aids, or fellow-laborers. Thus, Timothy was more than once clothed with the full authority of S. Paul. His name, like that of Titus, Sosthenes, and Silvanus,[4] is associated with S. Paul's in the superscription of Epistles. All that they lacked, during the lifetime of S. Paul, was a field of primary or separate jurisdiction. But, in serving thus in a secondary position, they simply followed the example of their leader. For it is to be observed that, during his ministry in Antioch, Saul himself was reckoned last among a company of "prophets," of which Barnabas was first. So, in the first missionary journey, he was second to Barnabas. It was twelve years or more after his first calling by our Lord, that he assumed a primary position as an Apostolic leader.[5]

*Second growth of the Apostolate.*

Such, then, was the catholic or ecumenical ministry of the Church: at first, one Apostolic company of Twelve, resident in Jerusalem; afterwards, when the door to the Gentiles had been opened, numerous companies or colleges of the same kind, acting dispersedly but harmoniously in all quarters of the world. The *collegiate principle*, which is manifest in all this, was never abandoned in the Church. Even when each great city came to have its own Bishop, the principle was retained in that ancient canon which required two or three prelates to concur in Episcopal ordinations; and still more fully, in the custom of annual or semi-annual Synods. Wherever truth was to be proclaimed with fulness of authority, as against some heresy, for example, the "great company of preachers" was obliged to come together.

*One College at first, then many.*

*The Principle fixed.*

[4] 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 and 2 Thessal. i. 1.

[5] Acts, xiii. 1, 2; xiv. 14; xv. 12, 25.

The sojourn of the Twelve in Jerusalem, the only Church founded by the original Apostolic College, enabled them to establish in that great centre the first pattern and example of a local Church.[6] There were Presbyters, or Elders, who, being sometimes called Bishops, or Overseers, may, for the sake of clearness, be distinguished as *Presbyter-Bishops*. To them were added the Seven, afterwards called *Deacons*. Finally, the work of organizing the mother Church at Jerusalem being duly accomplished, James, an Apostle, and probably one of the original Twelve, was put in special charge of that important See; and the other Apostles, leaving its government to him, separated, and departed on their respective missions.

LOCAL MINISTRY: *Presbyters, Deacons, with a Chief-Pastor, or Bishop.*

From that time forth, James stands before us in a twofold relation. He is an Apostle, reckoned first among the three main "pillars" of the universal Church. He is a local Chief-pastor, Bishop, or Overseer. We may call him, therefore, by way of distinction, the *Apostle-Bishop* of the See of Jerusalem.[7]

*James an Apostle-Bishop.*

Now, what the Apostles did collectively with regard to the mother See, they afterwards did severally, though from the difference of circumstances somewhat more slowly, with regard to other Churches in the limits of their respective missions. Wherever a Church was founded, Presbyters or Bishops[8] were ordained. To them a certain oversight, subject to that of the Apostolic founder, was duly committed. They could preach, teach, minister in things sacred, and act in

*The same System elsewhere.*

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[6] "The new Churches out of Palestine formed themselves after the pattern of the mother Church in Jerusalem . . . . James . . . . *stood* in Jerusalem, where he continued to reside, *at the head of the Church*, in equal esteem with the Apostles . . . . *quite in the relation of a later Bishop*, but without the appellation." Gies. *Ecc. Hist.* § 30. (Smith's Am. Ed.)

[7] Gal. i. 19; ii. 12; Acts, xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18.

[8] I *assume* the identity of meaning of these two names in the New Testament, though there is high authority among sound critics for making a distinction. Those who make the distinction can put the origin of city Sees and resident Bishops a little earlier than it is put in this chapter.

matters of discipline and doctrine as a kind of local council, senate, or sanhedrim. Deacons were in like manner appointed, with a special view to the administration of the charities of the Church. The proper sphere of woman, as a help-meet for man, in the higher as well as lower cares of life, was acknowledged in the assignment of certain charitable offices to Deaconesses and Widows,[9] the same, perhaps, that are sometimes called *elder women*, or Presbyteresses. The Churches, thus organized by each particular Apostle, continued to be the objects of his paternal care; were visited by him, or by some one of his company, at certain intervals; and, on the natural and equitable principle of each limiting his supervision to the line of his own labors, constituted his field or jurisdiction.[10] Thus S. Paul was Apostle-Bishop of Ephesus, Corinth, and many other places. The assignment of one resident head to each city Church was naturally reserved, until the number of Christians in each place, and the number of persons duly qualified and trained as "Apostles of Churches,"[11] rendered such an arrangement desirable and practicable.

*Deaconesses. Widows.*

*Elder Women.*

This simple order, by which the government of each local Church was so admirably knit to that of the Church at large, was everywhere quickened, as it were, by the *charismata*, largesses, or special "gifts," which followed the triumphant Ascension of our Lord to the Right Hand of the Majesty on High. Such "gifts" were needed as a "sign." In the lack of a sufficient number of persons duly educated for the office, they fitted a great mass of believers for some useful part in "the work of the Ministry," and were among the chief instruments of the supernatural growth of the Church.

CHARISMS, OR GIFTS.

Among these, the "gift" to be *Apostles* naturally held the first place. Close akin to this were the special endowments which distinguished the fit persons for *Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers.* Those who exhibited signs of the possession of these higher gifts, seem generally to have

*Their Order.*

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[9] 1 Tim. v. 9; Tit. ii. 3; Phil. iv. 3.

[10] 1 Cor. iv. 14–21; 2 Cor. x. 15, 16.

[11] 2 Cor. viii. 23.

been enrolled in the companies of the Apostles. Last of all were a crowd of inferior talents, *miracles, healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues,* and the like, which continued so short a time that the very meaning of the names is only matter of conjecture.

*Their Purpose.*

*Type.*

This wonderful profusion of extraordinary gifts for the Ministry is no essential part of the Ministry itself. It was simply a gracious provision for a single and peculiar crisis. It belonged to the sowing, or planting season. It was that flowering, or blossoming of the Tree of Life, which partly anticipated, and partly developed the fruits of ordinary intellectual and spiritual culture. Like the parallel phenomenon of the Old Testament[12]—the outbreak, namely, of the spirit of prophecy in the Camp, while the order of the Tabernacle was being established—it opened the way, and gave a Divine sanction, or sign, to the necessary division and distribution of ministerial functions.[13] As S. Paul declares: The gifts were given, "in order to fit believers for ministerial work"—to fit them "for the edification," or building up "of the Body of Christ."[14] When this miraculous fitting of men for the Ministry had been sufficiently accomplished; when, according to what seems to be the drift of the lively mixed metaphors of the Apostle, the Church had weathered the comparatively unsettled and critical time of its infancy, and was hardening into the definite proportions of maturer manhood; when, in short, its organic connection with Christ, the Head, had been compacted by the development of all the joints and bands of a harmonious system of order: then, *prophecies* began to fail; then, *tongues* began to cease; then, miraculous *knowledge* vanished away; then, the gifts, in short, and the beautiful and marvellous ministration of gifts, were quietly withdrawn from the sphere of human experience; and ordinary gifts, or talents, took their place.

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[12] Numbers, xi. 24–30.

[13] If any notions of *parity* existed among the early Christians, nothing could more effectually have rebuked such notions, and prepared men's minds for a system of subordinated grades in the Ministry, than the *measure* in which the gifts were given. See Rom. xii. 3.

[14] Ephesians, iv. 12–16; in which passages S. Paul declares (1) the *occasion* of these gifts, viz., the Ascension in triumph; (2) their *nature*, viz., *to be Apostles, Prophets,* etc., etc.; (3) their *object*, viz., πρὸς καταρτισμὸν—"for fitting," adapting, perfecting—"the saints," εἰς—"into ministerial work," etc.; (4) their *duration*, viz., *till* the Church, having passed its *infant* state, arrives at the well-compacted proportions of a mature and settled manhood, *i. e.*, till it should be strong enough to be left to the laws of ordinary and historic growth.

*Difference between Temporary and Permanent Mission.*

And this is confirmed by observing the difference made by our Lord between that *preparatory* and *extraordinary commission* given to the Twelve and the Seventy when they were sent forth two by two as Prophets of the Kingdom, and that *perpetual charge* laid upon the Twelve when they were sent forth with full powers to preach the Gospel. In the former commission He says: "Preach the Kingdom of Heaven at hand, heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." The power to do wonders is an essential part of their mission. But in the latter commission He says: "Go ye out into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature, baptize, teach all things that I have commanded; and lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." No extraordinary power is embodied in their commission. For, though miraculous gifts are afterwards alluded to, it is not in connection with the Ministry, but with the Church in general. "These signs shall follow them that believe." From all which it is evident that while the gift fitted men to be *able* Ministers of God, and sometimes designated the persons who should be admitted into the Ministry they were no essential feature of the Ministry, itself.

POWER COMMUNICATED.

In the exercise of their office as chief rulers of the Church, the Apostles did not hesitate to assert their authority when necessary, but at the same time avoided all appearance of despotic or monocratic rule. They communicated to the Presbyters every priestly power of the ministry,[15] and a share of every governing or kingly power. The particular function which they reserved absolutely to themselves was that of *ordination;* and even in this the Presbyters took part, when the person ordained was to be admitted into their own order. The "laying on of hands" for confirmation seems also to have been reserved to the highest order, at least during the Apostolic age.[16] In accordance with this fraternal communication of ministerial powers, the Presbyters, and Brethren generally, were taken into council with the Apostles, even in matters which the latter were perfectly competent to determine by themselves. In the same spirit S. Peter, in addressing the Presbyters, could speak of himself as their *sympresbyteros*, fellow-presbyter; the powers of the ministry being, in fact, so distributed, that no name can be given to any one order, which is not in some sense applicable to the others also. The earliest image, therefore, of the relation of the Presbytery of each local Church to the Chief Pastor, was that which represented the Bishop as in the place of Christ,[17] and the Presbyters as in the place of His "friends" and "brethren," the Twelve: an idea beautifully carried out in the most primitive arrangement of Churches; namely, that of thirteen thrones, the middle one of which was occupied by the Bishop, the others by the Presbyters. The Deacons, in like

*Relation of the Orders to one another.*

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[15] It is in priestly power, *sacerdotio*, that S. Jerome affirms the equality of Presbyters, Bishops, and Apostles. *Ep. ad Evangelum.*

[16] Bingham's *Antiquities*, B. ii. ch. xix.

[17] S. Ignatius (ad *Magnes.* 6) represents the three orders respectively as in the place of *God*, of the *Apostles*, of *Jesus Christ.* The context, however, seems to show that by the first of these expressions he means *Christ* as the Divine head; and by the third, Christ in His *earthly* ministry. It has been well observed by Pearson, Bingham, and others, that S. Ignatius exalts the Presbyters as earnestly as he does the Bishop. The same may be said of his way of speaking of that order, "the dearest" to him, the Deacons. The idea of coördination was more prominent to his mind than that of subordination—though the latter was not lost sight of. "My life for him that is subject to the Bishop, Presbyters, and Deacons—God's stewards, assessors, and ministers." See Bingham, ii. xix. 6–8; ii. xx. 18.

manner, were represented as "angels and prophets,"[18] bearing the *diaconia* of Jesus Christ: to wit, that out-going ministry, which our Lord exercised when He went about as a prophet, doing good. The three orders, in short, all participated in the threefold ministry; the main difference being, that in the first order the kingly idea was most prominent, in the second the priestly, and in the third the prophetic.

LAY INFLUENCE.

The People also were encouraged to take an active interest in Church affairs. The essential *kingly priesthood* of the mass of believers was as carefully inculcated upon the Christian, as it had previously been upon the Israelite Church.[19] The doctrine was carried out, moreover, into discipline and worship. As already mentioned, the Brethren were present at Apostolic councils; and decrees went forth in their name, as well as in that of the Apostles and Elders. In the choice of the seven Deacons, and possibly in that of Matthias, the precedent of election was established; so that the Church no sooner became settled than popular suffrage concurred with ordination in the appointment of Bishops and other Church officers. In contributing to the common cause the brethren were left free to tax themselves; in all acts of common worship they had an important part assigned them;[20] and even in the administration of discipline, that eminently

*Election of the Clergy.*

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[18] So called in Apostol. Constitut. ii. 30. I may observe, in passing, that Deacons in modern times being *young men* with little practical experience, and their office being regarded as a mere stepping-stone to a higher order, we have but a shadow of that diaconate which was held by such men as Stephen, Philip, Laurentius, Athanasius, and others, in ancient times. The custom of having only *seven* Deacons to a city, however large it may be (Canon 14, Neo-Cæsarea), helped to give dignity to the diaconal office.

[19] 1 Pet. ii. 5; Exod. xix. 6.

[20] The *Liturgies*, as is well known, abound with such mutual *benedictions*, etc., as "The Lord be with you: And with thy Spirit." For this reason, among many others, a Liturgy "understanded of the people" is highly important. Where the laity are deprived of their just part in public worship, they lose with it many other rights.

Apostolic office of binding and loosing, their coöperation was earnestly desired and thankfully acknowledged.[21]

*Need of the Episcopate.*

But in proportion as power thus descended and became distributed, as it were, among all the members of the Body of Christ, there was the greater need that the Bishopric,[22] that is, the supreme oversight and superintendence, should be exerted in a way to give it an effectual and decisive weight.

*Oversight, how exercised.*

The Apostles exercised it in a way that showed their sense of its importance. They fixed their residence, as far as possible, in the great world centres. Thus, from the central point of Ephesus, S. Paul, for three years, supervised the Church work going on throughout the whole Province of Asia. They made regular visitations, as frequent and as long as circumstances would permit, to the several Churches of their planting. In such visitations, the Presbyter-bishops were assembled, exhorted, admonished; discipline was administered when need so required; ministers were ordained, faith confirmed, and gifts bestowed by the laying on of hands. Questions of order, too hard for the local authorities, were then definitely settled. In this way, unity and uniformity were sufficiently secured. What Apostles ordained in one place, they had power and opportunity, if they deemed it advisable, to ordain in all.[23]

*Legates of the Apostles.*

And when, from the continuous enlargement of their respective fields of labor, the Apostles saw less than was desirable of the Churches under their charge, they exercised their oversight by written Epistles, or by sending one or other of their Colleagues or Companions, as Angels,

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[21] In this paragraph I refer chiefly to Acts, i. 26; vi. 5; xv. 23; 1 Cor. xiv. 16; 2 Cor. ix. 6–7; 1 Cor. v. 3–5; 2 Cor. ii. 5–10: passages which are confirmed in the interpretation I have given them by the uniform practice of the Church in the second and third centuries.

[22] Acts, i. 20. See Chapin's View . . . of the *Prim. Ch.* ch. xv.

[23] Acts, xv. 36; xiv. 21–23; xviii. 23; xx. 17–35; 2 Cor. xiii. 2; 1 Cor. xi. 34; xvi. 1, 2.

Messengers, or Apostles for the nonce. Persons thus sent were clothed with full authority, and it was required that they should be received and treated as the elder Apostles themselves.[24]

THEIR SUCCESSORS.

Finally, towards the end of their career, when the elder Apostles knew that the time of their departure was at hand, they in no case left their peculiar powers to the Presbyter-bishops, or to the local congregations;[25] but, according to the uniform testimony of the early Church, assigned Timothy to Ephesus, though there was in that city a numerous band of Presbyter-bishops; Titus to Crete; Linus, Cletus, and Clemens to Rome; Symeon to Jerusalem, after the death of James; Euodius and Ignatius to Antioch; Polycarp to Smyrna; Annianus to Alexandria; and others of their companions to other places. They gave to these, moreover, all the supervisory powers of the Apostolic office. As we learn from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and from the Book of Revelation, they were to see to the selection of fit men for Presbyter-bishops and Deacons; to ordain such as were approved; to try such as were accused; to rebuke, exhort,

*Powers given to them.*

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[24] Acts, xix 22; 2 Cor. xii. 18; viii. 23; 1 Cor. xvi. 10.

[25] S. Jerome's declaration, in the Epistle *ad Evangelum* (and in *Comment.* on Tit. i. 7), that "after *contentions arose*, one saying, I am of Paul, another, I of Apollos, etc., *it was decreed through the whole world*, that one of the Presbyters should be elected and placed over the others, and to him the whole care of the Church should pertain, that the seeds of schism might be removed," puts the origin of See-Bishops rather earlier than I have done; for such "contentions arose" quite early in Apostolic times. This famous Epistle, so often quoted in part, ought to be read as a whole. It would then be seen that S. Jerome's object is to show that a Presbyter is superior to a Deacon in *priesthood—sacerdotio esse majorem;* and that in respect of the same priesthood, *Presbyters*, *Bishops*, and *Apostles* are equal: a point universally conceded. This fact considered, his concluding words give the sum of his view of the ministry: "What Aaron, and his sons, and the Levites, were in the Temple, the same are Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons in the Church." The case of the Church of Alexandria, mentioned by S. Jerome and Ambrosiaster, is somewhat peculiar; but I reserve the discussion of it for another place. See Book II. ch. 10, of this History. See also Chapin,

admonish, with all authority; to expose the pretentions of false apostles; to exercise, in short, the same oversight and rule which the first generation of Church rulers had exercised before them.

*The Episcopate self-perpetuating.*

In this way the Bishopric, or Apostolate, as commissioned by our Lord after the Resurrection, had its own seed within it, and was everywhere transmitted and acknowledged as the sole supreme governing and ordaining power. The only power not thus transmitted was that of working miracles. But that, as we have seen, was given before, not after the Resurrection; and belonged then, as at all other times, to the extraordinary "prophetic office": namely, to that kind of preaching which prepares the way for a new system, or lays the foundations.

*Three Witnesses.*

About the time that this beginning of a succession was made among the Gentile Churches, S. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, died, and Symeon, a cousin of our Lord, was elected in his place. In the generation that immediately followed, there is one inspired witness of the order then existing, and two uninspired.

*S. John the first Witness.*

S. John, addressing the mystical Seven Churches of Asia, exhorts or reproves their respective Angels, a term etymologically equivalent to the word Apostles, and, as used by the writer of the Apocalypse, implying the same as Bishops in the modern sense. A question arises, however, whether the severe rebukes which prove these Angels to have been responsible heads of the seven Churches do not also prove them to have been subordinate to the Apostle S. John.[26] To this the obvious answer is that S. John merely writes "what the Spirit saith," in the character of a Prophet or Divine. In other words, it is not John who calls the seven Angels to account; it is the Lord himself.[27] There is nothing in the Apocalypse, therefore, to prove the existence of any office on earth, at that time, superior in order to that of the seven Angels. On the contrary, the fact that the Lord himself addresses them, and not the Apostle, rather proves them to have been in a position of accountability to the Lord alone.

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[26] Thiersch, the Irvingite historian, uses this supposed fact to prove the existence of his threefold Episcopate, Apostles, Angels, Bishops. If the fact were as he supposes, it would not prove the three distinct orders of the Episcopate; it would merely point to a metropolitan system.

[27] Rev. i. 11.

*S. Clement the second Witness.*

*Priestly analogy.*

*Military.*

*Order Divinely settled.*

The second witness of this period, S. Clement of Rome, by referring to the sacerdotal analogy of High-Priests, Priests, and Levites, or to the military analogy of Prefects, Chiliarchs, Centurions, and other officers, shows incidentally, and therefore the more powerfully, that the principle of subordination, or prelacy, was acknowledged in the Ministry. In the same incidental way he mentions Rulers and Presbyters in one place, Bishops and Deacons in another.[28] He testifies also that *the order of succession was settled by Divine Providence and by Apostolic authority.*[29] "The Apostles knew from our Lord Jesus Christ that contention would arise about the name of the Bishopric; for which reason, being possessed of perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the said (Bishops and Deacons), and gave order for the future, how, when these fell asleep, other approved men might be set in their place." This, he adds, was settled with the consent of the whole Church. It is plain, therefore, that the provision against schism, which some have represented as made by Presbyters after the Apostolic age, was made in reality by the Apostles, under Divine inspiration, and was received universally.

*S. Ignatius the third Witness.*

S. Ignatius of Antioch, whose ministerial life had been for thirty years contemporaneous with that of S. John, is still more positive in his testimony. That "the Episcopate is represented by him as the Divinely appointed pillar which sustains the whole ecclesiastical fabric,"[30] is now universally conceded by intelligent historians. It is therefore hardly necessary to cite his words: it is enough to remark that his witness, on this subject, is unaffected by the controversy with regard to the genuineness of certain portions of his remaining Epistles.[31]

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[28] S. Clem. Ep. Cap. i. xlii. xliv.

[29] I quote S. Clement only for *this point*, because the sentence, in relation to other points, is somewhat confused.

[30] Dr. Hase, *Hist. of Christian Church*, § 59. This writer adds, and Dr. Schaff follows him in the assertion, that the Episcopate "*much needed his*

*Metropolitan System.*

A question still remains, as to how far the Episcopate, thus settled, assumed in Apostolic times that metropolitan form which it afterwards bore, and to which in all ages it naturally, and perhaps logically, tends.[32]

*Mother Cities.*

It is certain, that among the ancients the Mother City was not only a centre of social and political influence, but an object of those loyal, reverential, affectionate feelings, which in modern times we associate rather with the word fatherland, or mother country. By devoting so much of their time as they did to these great centres, the Apostles availed themselves of this state of things, and, it may be said, gave their countenance to it. They made the centres of religious influence coincident with those of social or political power. It was natural, therefore, that whatever equality might exist among Bishops, Angels, or Apostles, as such, considerable inequalities

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*earnest commendations;*" namely, that it was a *novelty*, and therefore needed defence. If earnest commendation of a thing is proof of its novelty, we shall have to regard the very Faith itself as a novelty; for there is not a writer, from S. Paul down, who does not earnestly commend it.

[31] Dr. Hase, § 73, fully admits this; see also Cureton, *Corpus Ignatianum;* and Schaff, *Hist.*, etc.

[32] Dr. Schaff urges that the logical tendency of Episcopacy is to absolute centralization, *i. e.*, *Popery*. So would I say, if this centralizing tendency had not been controlled by our Lord himself in the appointment of twelve *brethren*, who were to call no man *father*, *i. e.*, pope, upon earth, but were to hold to their Head in Heaven. In other words, everything in the Church *tends* to a centre or point; the only question is, *where* that centre is to be found. Some say in Rome. We say in Heaven. Some make "the kingdom" perfect here on earth. We regard it as imperfect here, and therefore *wait* for "His appearing and Kingdom." To this I might add that those who represent the original government of the Church as Presbyterian, yet acknowledge that it *changed* into Episcopal in one or two generations. How can they escape the inference that Presbyterianism *logically tends* to Episcopacy.

should arise as to the influence and weight of their respective Sees.

Thus James, one of the last and least of the Apostles, came to have a certain precedence over Peter and John.[33] Doubtless, it was because he was the head of the Mother Church. In after times Jerusalem, which had been first, came to be last, in point of influence among the chief Churches. As soon as this was the case, the Bishop of Jerusalem ranked accordingly.

*Precedence of Jerusalem.*

The metropolitan system, therefore, and in fact the whole system of precedence that obtained in the early Church, was a natural development from the twofold representative character of Bishops. As representatives of Christ, the Head, all Bishops were "brethren," "colleagues," peers. As representatives of particular Churches, or cities, they could allow certain distinctions of honor or of power to grow up among them. Differences of this kind developed, and were more clearly systematized and defined, as the way was gradually opened for provincial or general Councils.

*Twofold Character of Bishops.*

It was, in fact, one form in which *the lay element*, as it has been sometimes called—the influence of numbers, masses, position, and other things that have weight in secular affairs—gradually made itself to be felt in the government of the Church. Hence the rule of precedence that prevailed, and which was firmly maintained by the six Ecumenical Councils, was that Bishops should rank according to the importance of their Sees. Rome, indeed, contended for a different rule. Foundation by S. Peter presented, in her judgment, a superior claim. But in spite of her efforts, ecclesiastical precedence followed the changes of political, and instead of Jerusa-

*Rule of Precedence.*

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[33] This appears in the Council, Acts, xv. The placing of his name before those of Cephas and John, Gal. ii. 9, is an argument of a certain precedence; though I do not think it amounts to anything more than an acknowledgment of the importance of the Church which he represented. The same is to be said of the prayer *pro fidelibus* in the Ap. Constitutions, where the Bishop of Jerusalem is prayed for *before* him of Rome and Antioch.

lem, Cæsarea, Antioch, Rome, Alexandria, the order of the Churches came in time to be—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and, last of all, Jerusalem.

*How determined.*

All this, however, belongs to later history. In Apostolic times the question of precedence was little thought of; and, so far as it was considered, it seems to have heen determined by the rules of equity and common-sense.

## CHAPTER XII.

### DOCTRINE AND HERESIES.

THE GOSPEL.

WHEN the Disciples were sent two by two before the face of the Lord, as prophets of the Kingdom, their prophesying was summed up in the one pregnant phrase, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In the same way, when the Apostles went forth, their evangel, gospel, god-spell, or good news, was the announcement and explication of the simple historic fact, that the Head of that promised Kingdom had truly come and done the work which the Prophets of the Old Testament had so long before predicted. More briefly stated: it was simply *God manifest in the Flesh*. This involved the verity that He had been born, had lived, suffered, died, and especially had risen from the dead, and ascended up in triumph to the Right Hand of the Majesty on high. To witness to this truth was the office for which the Church had been created. To receive the same in its fulness; to embrace it with all the heart, all the soul, all the mind; to measure all other truth by it, making it the "analogy," or "rule of faith"; to discern it in its moral and intellectual, as well as spiritual bearings;[1] in

*Christ come in the Flesh.*

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[1] Examples of this measuring of all truth and duty by "the Gospel," are Rom. vi. 1–14; 1 Cor. xv. 1, 3, 11, 12, etc.; Ephes. v. 22, 33; Coloss. ii. 12; iii. 1–5; 1 Pet. iv. 1; 1 John, iv. 2.

short, to admit it wholly, in all its consequences, as a living principle pervading the whole life, was to be the substance of right faith, and the sum of sound doctrine to the end of time.

*Three drifts of Heresy.*

*Spiritualist.*

*Rationalist.*

*Sensuous.*

But nature is always partial or one-sided in its apprehension of the Truth. Measuring everything by a standard of human imperfection, it is naturally eclectic, choosing its own ground or point of view, and holding one half of a doctrine, to the denial, exclusion, or overlaying of other parts equally vital and essential. For, in the reception of any fact or doctrine, almost everything depends upon the standing-point assumed. A man of transcendental turn, relying exclusively on his own spiritual intuitions, will despise the sensible evidences, the miracles, the sacraments, the Scriptures, the external body of Religion. Such men fall into gnostic, mystic, transcendental, or spiritualist heresies. Another class of men believe in naught but rational induction, or logical demonstration. Like the Jews of old, they are always demanding "a sign." Such men are apt to become positivists, rationalists, their pravity taking sometimes a negative or skeptical, and sometimes, when the mind grows weary of denying, an arbitrarily positive form. But, to the great mass of men, Religion is a matter of feeling, or affection, rather than of speculative insight, or rational conviction; and this bias, taking sometimes an enthusiastic, sometimes an æsthetic, or sometimes a legal and moral turn, leads in its excess to a numerous class of sensuous heresies.

*Divine Standpoint.*

Such being the well-known proclivities of the human heart, it pleased our Lord, in giving His Truth to men, to provide at the same time a divine standing-point from which the truth was to be regarded. Those who believed were to be baptized. As there was one Spirit, there was to be one Body. Those who held to the doctrine of the Apostles were to hold to their fellowship. The Church, in short, was appointed to be the pillar and ground of the Truth.

But even in the best balanced minds, and from whatever ground or point of view, there will be more or less of a tendency to one or other of the extremes above mentioned. In this life we can know but in part; we can see but through a glass darkly. According, therefore, to the inherent peculiarities of each individual nature, there will be a disposition to look at Truth through the sensuous, the rational, or the transcendental glass, and thus to fall into partial or heretical opinions. This leaning, however, when guarded and controlled by mutual charity, and by a ground of unity sufficiently defined, is not only harmless, but wholesome; bringing out the one Truth in a greater variety of aspects, and making it intelligible to a greater variety of minds.

*Necessary Differences.*

*Three Leanings.*

Of this wholesome development in particular directions, S. John, S. Paul, and S. Peter were the most prominent representatives in Apostolic times. S. John delighted to contemplate the absolute, simple Truth: the Truth as seen in itself, as seen in God. He was therefore the type of the theologian or divine. S. Paul presented the Truth rather in its manifold relations to waywardness and weakness of the human understanding [2] He is the type of the able reasoner, the versatile expounder, the ready controversialist, the profound and skilful teacher. S. Peter, endowed by nature with affections intensely human, found it more congenial to "taste the Lord as gracious," than to behold Him with eagle eye as the Light and Life. To S. John, Christ was the incarnate "Word"; to S. Paul, "the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession"; to S. Peter, "the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls." S. John, from his high pitch of contemplation, addressed the body of believers as "little children"; S. Paul wrestled with them on more equal terms, as "men" and "brethren"; S. Peter singled out one class or another, as

TYPES OF DOCTRINE.

*S. John.*

*S. Paul.*

*S. Peter.*

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[2] On the subject of this paragraph the German critics have shown much solid as well as brilliant ingenuity: some of them, such as Baur, with a view to magnify different ways of seeing into differences of belief. To the student, who will take the pains to trace, not merely the different modes of thought or expression among the sacred writers, but their wonderful harmony, the study of this subject will be found well worthy of attention.

husbands, wives, masters, servants, elders, juniors, or when he addressed them as a mass, it was with the pastoral word "beloved." Without entering into all the distinctions of this kind, which have been pointed out by critics, and considerably exaggerated, it may be observed, in short, that while each of these great teachers presented the whole and living Truth, S. John dwells chiefly on the Incarnation as a mysterious whole, a "light" illumining all other lights; S. Paul on the Death and Resurrection, especially the latter, as the logical basis of all doctrine, all morals, and all "glory"; S. Peter on the living, toiling, suffering, bleeding, dying Christ, as the "precious" example, the precious ransom, the irresistible appeal to all noble, earnest, tender, and generous affections. To these S. James is sometimes added, as representing a fourth position. To judge from his Epistle, he is less a representative of doctrine than of that reactionary appeal to conscience and common-sense, which becomes necessary when doctrinal discussion has gone too far; when orthodoxy, in fact, is made a substitute for faith. To heated polemics, therefore, in times of dogmatic strife, this remarkable production has seemed a mere "epistle of straw."[3] In other times, and under other circumstances, amid the lip-worship and licentiousness of a self-seeking age, it comes up as a sharp point of that ancient rock of common truth underlying all religion, the Sermon on the Mount.

*S. James.*

Differences of this kind may be allowed for, without imagining anything analogous to separate schools or parties in the Apostolic Church. Pauline and Petrine factions may undoubtedly have existed; but the great teachers knew nothing of them, except to repudiate them. They understood themselves, and understood one another.

*Harmony of the Apostles.*

It may be observed, moreover, by way of counterpoise to the distinctions above mentioned, that each of the great Apostles glides occasionally, in his style, into the peculiarities of the others. S. John, for instance, dwells on the *sensible* manifestation of the Word of Life; S. Paul frequently pauses to admire "the mystery of godliness"; S. Peter speaks of "the Word," that is, the Truth, as the regenerating power. The same may be said of the differences of the four Gospels. While it is true that the Man and Prophet appears most prominently in S. Matthew, the King in S. Mark, the Priest in S. Luke, and the essential Deity in S. John,[4] yet there is no one of the four Evangelists in which all do not appear. There are distinctions, in short, but no antagonisms.

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[3] *Luther*, in his impatience, so characterized it. It was under other circumstances that *Butler* and *Bull* drew from it appropriate lessons for the times. *Neander* is so unappreciative of this Epistle that he arbitrarily supposes it to have been written before James was thoroughly acquainted with the Gospel.

*Four Gospels.*

To this general account of the great types of doctrinal development,[5] it is necessary to add that the Apostles, like their Master, were seed-sowers of the Truth, not framers of systems. To give their teaching, therefore, in other language than their own, comes hardly within the legitimate province of the historian. The attempt has been made, indeed, by innumerable modern critics; and under the heads of the theology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology of the sacred writers, valuable contributions have been made to the cause of biblical interpretation. Yet none of these efforts represent, or in the nature of things can represent, more than the amount of truth seen from particular points of view.[6] As contributions to sacred criticism they all

*Scope of Doctrinal History.*

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[4] Hence the application to the four Evangelists of the four faces respectively of the "living creatures" in the Apocalypse, the man, the lion, the ox, the eagle.

[5] The word *development* has been much abused by Dr. Newman and others, in modern times; yet I know of no word to substitute for it in the history of doctrine. The term, in fact, is harmless, if we are careful not to confound development—which is the opening, defining, and applying of truths contained in Holy Writ—with corruptions and accretions derived from other sources.

[6] Neander is one of the largest-minded and most genial of historic critics of this kind; yet, in his "Planting of Christianity," S. Paul, S. John, S. Peter, and even our Lord himself, are completely Neanderized. Thiersch,

have their value. As accounts of what the Apostles taught, in determination of questions still *sub lite*, they are worse than useless; giving the garb of historic fact to things which, however excellent and ingenious, are nothing more or less than private and modern schemes of polemical divinity.

*Proper Range.*

The History of Apostolic doctrine must confine itself to a somewhat narrower range. Not what systems these first Teachers taught, but what materials, what conditions, what elements they left of systems afterwards drawn from them, or put upon them, is the utmost that can be attempted in a narrative of facts.

*Four Heads.*

And these elements may all be considered under four heads: 1, The Oral Teaching, or tradition of the Apostles; 2, Their Creed, or Rule of Faith; 3, Their Inspired Writings; 4, The Heresies against which they contended, and which may have influenced more or less the form, style, manner, or particular topics of their teaching.

I. ORAL TEACHING.

The Apostles taught orally. Their doctrine, therefore, had to be treasured in the memories of believers. If we consider how vast the field was, and how many of the laborers in this field must have been, like Apollos, imperfectly instructed, it will not appear wonderful that a corrupt tradition spread almost as rapidly as the true; and that many things were attributed to Apostles for which they were not responsible. Thus, S. Paul had hardly left the Church of Thessalonica before he learned that his doctrine of Christ's coming had been misunderstood. In the same way the traditions that flowed into the second century were very soon corrupted. They were almost invariably alleged in favor of doubtful facts, or heretical opinions. Papias, it is said, took great pains to collect the genuine sayings of our Lord. But few of these gleanings have remained in the literature of the Church;[7]

*Tradition soon corrupted.*

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in the same way, has beautifully Irvingized the Doctrine of the Apostles; a thing which would be less objectionable if it were done in a professed "commentary," or in an Irvingite tract, and not under the garb of history."

[7] See Routh, *Reliq. Sac.* vol. i.

and these few give little occasion to regret that the rest have perished.

Tradition, in the sense of the general spirit or drift of Apostolic teaching, or instructions embodied in particular observances, were of a more enduring character, and exerted, without doubt, a greater influence. Thus, the sacredness of the Lord's Day, the practice of infant baptism, the authority of the Old Testament, the use of Creeds, and other things of like character, might easily remain when mere words or phrases would be forgotten or perverted. The same might be said of everything in which the second century was unanimous. The mind of an age, however, is so entirely assimilated by the age which follows, that, in general, tradition means little more than the prevailing sentiment of the day in which it is appealed to. We find, accordingly, that even in matters of practical observance, the Apostolic tradition came soon to be suspected, unless it were supported by Apostolic writings.[8]

*Tradition in general.*

The first bulwark raised against the corruption of tradition was probably in the form of a brief Creed, or Rule of Faith.[9] Something of this sort is frequently alluded to in the New Testament, in such expressions as "the form of sound words," "the Gospel," or evangel, "the faith once (for all) delivered to the Saints," or "the doctrine" into which they "were delivered";[10] S. Paul, especially, not only referring to such a "Gospel" once preached, but declaring it so unalterable that neither he nor an angel from heaven could deviate from it. The natural outline of this summary would be suggested by the

II. THE CREED.

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[8] S. Cyprian, in the question of re-baptizing heretics, would acknowledge no tradition but that which he found in Scripture.

[9] I use the phrase, as a convenient one, without any reference to controversies on the subject. In the common-sense use of words, anything once fixed as a matter of belief becomes practically a rule of faith. The brief summary of the Gospel, therefore, which all believers received, would be in a peculiar, but not exclusive sense, *the* rule of faith. See Hagenbach, *Hist. of Doctrines*, § 20.

[10] Rom. vi. 17; literally, "the type of doctrine into which ye were delivered."

first formal act of faith. Every person admitted *in the Name of the Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, into the *Church Catholic*, by *Baptism, for the Remission of Sins,* with a view to the *Resurrection of the Dead and the Life everlasting,* would of course be required to say "credo" to all this; and that he might say it in good faith, would be instructed into its meaning. But those few words, briefly qualified or explained, make up the outline and the substance of the Creeds or Symbols of all ages. Such an outline, moreover, committed to memory by every believer, would be a "rule of faith"; that is, a touchstone of sound doctrine, alike available to learned and unlearned, to readers and simple hearers.

*The Baptismal Faith.*

In the absence of any direct evidence to the contrary,[11] it seems most probable that the filling up of this outline was not always in the same words; but that the forms of confession were marked from the beginning by the same diversity in language, with the same identity in substance, which we find among the symbols of a somewhat later period. By slight verbal variations shades of meaning might be expressed in one, which were not contained in others. Like the four Gospels, or the four ancient Liturgies, the creeds would thus be mutually completed, guarded, and explained.

*Symbols numerous.*

But a safeguard would be needed against corruptions of the Creeds themselves; and still more against corruptions of the larger, more diffuse, and more minute instructions of the Lord, and of His Apostles. The four Gospels therefore were written; not early, nor all at once, but at certain intervals, under varied circumstances, by different writers, and yet with a harmony absolutely demonstrative of a divine authorship. Of these S. Matthew's was probably put forth before

III. SACRED WRITINGS.

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[11] Bp. Bull contends for *two* primitive Creeds—that of Jerusalem in the East, and that of the Apostles in the West. I can see no reason why there should not have been more. On the general subject, see *History of Creeds*, by Rev. W. W. Harvey, M.A.; and Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, x. iii. 5.

*Gospels. Acts.*

the Apostles left Jerusalem, and possibly in Hebrew, or Aramaic. S. Mark's, indited under the auspices of S. Peter, is of uncertain date. S. Luke's, and its continuation, the Acts of the Apostles, appear to have been written either during or shortly after the first imprisonment of S. Paul. The Gospel of S. John was stored up in the bosom of the beloved Disciple till near the close of the first century. We learn from S. Luke that many had taken in hand to write narratives of this kind ; so that a bulwark was needed against unreliable Scriptures, as well as against corrupted forms of oral tradition.[12]

*Other Scriptures.*

The Catholic Epistles seem all to have been the fruit of the later years of their respective writers. The Epistles of S. Paul were written to particular Churches, or persons, on particular emergencies ; and may be dated from internal evidence with considerable precision.[13] The Apocalypse, which appeared about the year ninety-five, has been appropriately placed at the close of the sacred series : its splendid and mystic imagery forming, as it were, the great Altar-window of the Temple of Inspiration.

*Allegorical Interpretation.*

*The Testimony of Jesus the Spirit of Prophecy.*

In addition to these sacred writings, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were earnestly commended to the first age of believers, as inspired, and profitable for doctrine; and in the interpretation of them, the "testimony of Jesus" was made the "spirit of prophecy." The consequence was, that "the rule of faith" became also the rule of interpretation. That analogical process, by which, in reading the Old Testament, we almost unconsciously transmute the letter into the spirit, seeing Christ everywhere, became the fixed habit of the Church mind ; and occasionally degenerated into frivolous allegorizing.[14] The historical importance of this fact can hardly be overrated. For on the mode of interpretation favored by any age, its theological drift is in a great measure determined. It may be observed, that the Gnostics had little reverence for the Old Testament Scriptures; they used them largely, however, and applied both to them and to the writings of the New Testament, the allegorical method.[15] But their allegorizing was purely arbitrary; that of the Christians was kept within bounds by the dominant influence of "the analogy of the faith." In both cases it was application of the Scriptures rather than strict interpretation. This is seen in the fact that diverse applications of the same text, so long as they did not contradict the commonly received doctrines, were not regarded as contradicting one another.

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[12] The uninspired writings of this period are the first Epistle of S. Clement, and perhaps the second : possibly, also, the Epistl of S. Barnabas, and the Pastor of Hermas. The spurious writings, ascribed to this age, were composed in the second century, or later. For a list of them, see Foulkes's *Manual of Ecclesiastical History.*

[13] See Chap. iv. of this Book.

IV.
HERESIES.

In the Apostolic age, as in the Church since, the development, definition, or application of doctrine waited on opportunity, and had more or less of a defensive character against errors, or erroneous tendencies of the times. No heretics are mentioned by name in the New Testament, with the exception of the Nicolaitans; and, perhaps, Hymenæus and Alexander, whose "shipwreck of faith," however, may have been simple apostasy. The Diotrephes, censured by S. John in his second Epistle, was probably an ambitious Presbyter, or a tyrannizing Bishop. Heretical opinions are more frequently alluded to. But as they are not described, and are combated only in their elementary principles, it cannot be ascertained how far any of them had assumed a systematic shape.

Among the Greeks and philosophic Jews, there was an arro-

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[14] The Epistle to the Hebrews exhibits a severe moderation in the use of this method. The Epistle of Barnabas, which *may* belong, however, to the second century, indulges in it with the utmost freedom: so, also, the *Shepherd of Hermas*. The Epistle of S. Clement and the Epistles of S. Ignatius show less of it. S. Irenæus, and the Fathers after him, carry it occasionally to excess. Origen developed it into a more systematic shape.

[15] For ingenious specimens of this perversion, see *Simon Magus* in *Refutat. Omn. Hæresium*, S. Hippolyti, lib. vi.

GNOSIS.

*Evil in Matter.*

*The Soul a Captive.*

*Docetæ*

gant and pretentious speculative spirit, which judged all religions by its own instincts or intuitions, discerned some good in all, and was disposed to frame, out of materials drawn from all, a more scientific system. By the votaries of this *gnosis*, or "science falsely so called," the principle that *evil inheres in matter*[16] was an axiom universally admitted. They despised the physical world as the creation of some inferior and perhaps evil Power. The body they considered a mere incumbrance, instead of holding it in honor (as something pertaining) to the completeness of our humanity.[17] They regarded the soul as a sort of captive, and looked for its deliverance in the entire destruction of the body after death, and during life in complete abstraction from it. Hence great austerities among some. Hence an opinion among others, that the distinction of good and evil, so far as this world is concerned, is a mere *thesis*, or arbitrary appointment devised by evil Powers. Where such maxims prevailed, a denial of the *resurrection of the body*,[18] or an assertion of *a spiritual resurrection* only, would necessarily follow. The doctrine of *the Incarnation* would either be denied or subtly explained away. Among efforts of this kind the *docetic* theory, namely, Christ a pure spirit with a fantasmal or apparitional body, was one of the earliest and most popular. From numerous expressions in the New Testament it is highly probable that the idea of a *pleroma*, or fulness of God's presence, from which all bodily existence is excluded;[19] of "endless genealogies," that is, processions or emanations of *æons, angels, principalities, powers,* a long chain of mediators between the world and God; and, in short, all the elementary notions which afterwards entered into the various Gnostic systems, were in vogue among the Greeks or Hellenizing Hebrews, and were started into activity by the preaching of the Gospel.

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[16] Opposed by such passages as 1 Tim. iv. 4.

[17] Such seems to me the meaning of the *original* in Col. ii. 23; the word translated "satisfaction" being equivalent to *completeness*, and that rendered "flesh" standing often (as in S. John, i. 14) for *man*.

[18] 1 Cor. xv. 12.

[19] To which S. Paul opposes the truth, that in Christ the fulness of the Godhead (pleroma) dwells *bodily*. Col. ii. 9. This chapter, the most suggestive on the subject, can hardly be understood without careful reference to the original. Other Anti-Gnostic passages are (perhaps) 1 Tim. i. 4; iv. 1–5; vi. 20; 1 John, i. 1–3; iv. 1–3; 2 Peter, ii.; Jude. See Hammond, on the New Testament.

*Simon Magus.*

To Simon Magus, a philosopher and wonder-worker of no ordinary powers, and to Samaria, the home of mixed races and mixed creeds, tradition has assigned the earliest attempt at a definite Gnostic system. His views come down to us encumbered with the accretions of later times. "From *Sige,* Silence, the invisible, incomprehensible, eternal root of all things, sprang two mighty powers: the one above called *Nous,* the universal directing mind, which is of the male sex; the other below, a female, *Epinoia,* or intelligence, by which all things are generated."[20] From these two roots sprang four others, similarly, in pairs. The story that Simon identified Helen, his concubine, with Helen of Troy and other female firebrands of antiquity, and made her a sort of impersonation of that "lost sheep" wandering here below, *Epinoia* or intelligence, looks like a genuine tradition, and accords with the radically Antinomian character of most of the early sects. To him the world was evil, society evil, marriage evil. The spirit, therefore, that rebels against law and order, was, from his point of view, the imprisoned divine spark struggling to be free. He availed himself largely of the language of the Old Testament, putting his own meaning upon it: and borrowed from Christianity some notions of redemption. He represented himself to be the great Power of God—the Father to Samaritans, the Son to Jews, the Holy Ghost to Gentiles—come into the world for the recovery of the "lost sheep."

*Sige.*

*Nous.*

*Epinoia.*

Dositheus and Menander were likewise Samaritans, and endeavored in like manner to appropriate to themselves the character of redeemers. The Nicolaitanes,[21] referred to in the Apocalypse, were Gnostics only in the larger sense of the word; professing that kind of *gnosis*, or superior light, which makes all bodily acts indifferent, and regards all things as lawful. They were equally opposed to the moral and the ceremonial law.

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[20] Hippolytus quotes from Simon at some length; and his account of the heresy is probably the most accurate that has come down to us.

*Dositheus, Menander. Nicolaitanes.*

Heresies of this kind sprang from the indulgence of a profane speculative spirit. They are interesting as showing that the advent of the Gospel did not find the world slumbering, but awake and completely armed, ready not only to contest every inch of ground, but to avail itself for this purpose of weapons drawn from the armory of Christianity itself.

*Historic Importance.*

Towards *sensuous* or *carnal* errors, a class which tends less to contradict than to overlay and corrupt the faith, there was a most decided proclivity among the Corinthian Christians; showing itself in an over-estimate of "gifts," in a tendency to man-worship, in party and sect spirit, in desire to "judge" and "reign," and in a disorderly state of things generally.[22] The love of novelty and excitement had much to do with this. Towards the end of the century it had grown to such an extent that a large party in Corinth proposed to make the ministry not only an elective, but a rotatory office.[23] The same spirit showed itself elsewhere in fleshly

SENSUOUS HERESIES.

*Schism.*

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[21] They got their name, it is said, from Nicolaus, one of the seven Deacons. See Euseb. iii. 29. That the Antinomian spirit early availed itself of pretensions to knowledge, *gnosis*, which exempted its possessors from ordinary restraints, is obvious from the use of the word "knowledge" throughout the whole of 1 Cor. viii.

[22] 1 Cor. iii. 1, 3, 4, 21; iv. 3, 8, 18; xi. 17–22; xiv. 26; *et passim:* the general effect of heresy of this sort seems to be intimated in 1 Cor. iii. 12–15; it does not *oppose* the fundamental faith, but overbuilds it with incongruous materials.

[23] Such seems to me the most rational account of that sedition in Corinth, against which S. Clement's letter was written. The Corinthians contended for the right to depose Presbyters without any crime proven against them.

notions of the millennium, and of the nearness of Christ's coming. It is remarkable that, as the speculative religionists dignified their fancies with the high-sounding name of *gnosis*, so the carnal Corinthians, in magnifying "gifts" and splitting up into parties, seem to have thought themselves preëminently "spiritual."[24]

*Gifts over-valued.*

The Judaizing spirit, in its proper and pure form, seems to have been of a rationalistic kind, springing from low and earthly views of the character of the Messiah.[25] In Pharisee and Sadducee alike, it was captious and full of doubts. It stumbled especially at the Divinity of Christ, and at the Catholicity of His mission. It was always demanding "signs," yet slow of heart to believe when signs were given. But the Pentecostal age was unfavorable to the development of a spirit of this kind; so that, beyond a stubborn prejudice against the mission of S. Paul, and a disposition to linger in the mere elements of Christianity, the Judaizing tendency was effectually kept down. The sect in which it finally showed itself with least admixture of foreign elements, was the respectable but little known society of the Nazarenes. Acquiescence in the creed, a cordial reception of the Sermon on the Mount, observance of the Law, adherence to the Gospel of S. Matthew to the exclusion of later Scriptures, and an undue elevation of morals above doctrine, seem to have been its prominent characteristics. Of the three stages of light and knowledge described by Origen—namely, Jesus the son of David, Christ the incarnate Son, and the everlasting Word—the Nazarenes preferred to linger in the first and lowest stage; "they were blind men, forever crying, *Jesus, Son of David*, have mercy on me."

JUDAIC HERESIES.

*Nazarines.*

*Blind Men.*

As a general rule, the obstructive Judaizers either yielded to

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[24] 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

[25] The real drift of the Judaic spirit is seen in such passages as S. Luke, iv. 28; xxii. 70, 71; S. John, iii. 9; iv. 48; v. 18; vi. 52; viii. 58, 59; xix. 7; Acts, vii. 52; xi. 3; xiii. 45; xv. 1; xxii. 21, 22; Heb. iii. 3–6; v. 11–14, and vi. 1; Gal. ii. 13, 16; v. 1–6, etc., etc.

*Cerinthus.*

*Christ an Æon.*

the demonstrations of power which accompanied the Gospel, or were drawn into a vortex of gnostic and sensuous speculations. Hence a form of *gnosis,* which was a medley of all notions. Cerinthus, as described by Epiphanius, is the type of this class. At first a ringleader of the opponents of S. Paul, but disabled and not a little disgusted at the course of James and Peter in the Council at Jerusalem, he continued to maintain in part the inviolability of the Law, but engrafted upon it germs from the Samaritan philosophy. The world he represented as created and administered by lower gods, or æons. The heavenly Christ, an æon of the highest order, descended upon the blameless Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, at His baptism in the Jordan, inhabited Him through life, left Him on the Cross, but is to join Him once more and reign upon the earth in the kingdom of the Millennium.[26] This prurient heresy, which Epiphanius compares to the two-headed hairy serpent Sepedon, and which could be sheep or goat at will, using the Old Testament against the New, or the New against the Old, spread like a plague in Asia Minor, and awakened the particular abhorrence of S. John.

*Ebion.*

The Ebionites were probably Jewish Christians, so called from an affectation of poverty—the word Ebion meaning poor—or from a leader of that name: either theory being equally probable, and equally incapable of proof.[27] To their Judaizing they added the theory of Cerinthus. They are somewhat inconsistently described as very strict in morals, and decidedly Antinomian; from which it may be inferred that their name covered a considerable variety of sects.

Thus the corruption of Judaism mingled with that of Heathenism, engendering monstrous dreams. The inspired wisdom of the Apostles dealt little with heresy as developed into systems. Writing for all time, they combated the evil in its elements, or first principles. For the learned curiosity, which delights to trace error through all its kaleidoscopic combinations, they had neither leisure nor inclination. In the provision, however, that they made against error, we see everywhere the proof of a forethought more than human. A rule of faith, brief, simple, comprehensive, stating facts rather than dogmas, and stamped on the heart and memory of each individual believer; a discipline and communion, the same everywhere; and finally, a body of sacred writings, easily distinguished from all spurious and apocryphal productions, attested from without, and bearing their own witness in themselves, were precisely the things needed to separate Church doctrine from the chaos of loose opinions with which it might otherwise have been hopelessly confounded. The times that followed the first century amply demonstrated the wisdom of such threefold provision. As heresy organized, it was confronted by a mightier organization, prepared at every point to meet it. As it became more methodical, and more moral, imitating more closely the tenets and discipline of the Church, it was met by a harmony and unity beyond its imitation. The Church system, in short, was one that took in the whole man. It had a spirit and a body. It was equally adapted to heart and mind and soul. On whichever side, therefore, the flood of heresy might come in, there was a barrier provided.

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[26] Euseb. iii. 28. Epiphan. *Hæres.* xxviii.

[27] The learned criticism that has demolished so many historical characters, merely because their names happened to be significant, has been itself demolished by the exquisite *jeu d'esprit* of Mr. Rogers, on the names of Newman, Wiseman, Wilde, Masterman; to which might be added Goode, Golightly, Horsman, and sundry others in the Tractarian and Papal Aggression controversies. See *Eclipse of Faith.*

*Error combated in First Principles.*

*Provision against Error.*

In this respect, the Apostolic Church differs from all human schools. In it, more than in any rival system, order and liberty were able to stand together. It did not exclude a variety of standing-points: it simply harmonized them. Peter, in following Christ by a life of adventurous activity, might not be able to comprehend precisely what that other "man" was doing, who sat still and mused; he might find in "brother Paul" some things perplexing to him:

*Peculiarity of the Church.*

but there was one fellowship, one faith, one baptism, one spirit, one body, one hope; and if there was any point in which oneness did not as yet appear, it was as easy to distrust one's self, as to distrust God's promise. Where there are different men, there are differences of perfection, differences of attainment. The legitimate course, then, is "whereto we have attained, to walk by the same rule, to mind the same thing." In short, while unity of faith and practice was thoroughly provided for in the Apostolic system, it was not so provided as to exclude the necessity of charity, humility, and patience. To "speak the truth in love," or as the original seems to mean, to "win the truth by love" was to be the pervading principle of all genuine orthodoxy.

*Many Standpoints harmonized.*

*Truth in Love.*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### RITES.—OBSERVANCES.—MORALS.

Four thousand years of preparation for the Church, with the ritual education of the chosen people, left little need of instruction in the decencies of Religion. That men were to pray in reverent postures, that they were to fast at certain times, to celebrate festive occasions with suitable marks of joy, to assemble for common prayer—in short, to make worship a social, and therefore an orderly, uniform, and duly regulated thing—was sufficiently understood by Jew and Greek, by barbarian, Scythian, bond, and free. Our Lord, therefore, in His teachings, confined Himself mainly to the meaning and spirit of such acts.[1] Leaving the Church to clothe herself, from the abundant material which ages of devotion had accumulated, in such garments of external sanctity as should be

*In Ritual little Instruction needed.*

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[1] Matt. vi. 1–18.

found most in keeping with her doctrine, He merely set an example of preferring simple to complicated forms; of consecrating the obvious and catholic elements of nature, rather than symbols of a local, national, or purely conventional character.

*Baptism.*

Baptism, that is, washing with water, a symbol of spiritual cleansing common to all religions, He substituted for Circumcision, as the rite of initiation, or new birth, into the Divine Name and Family. The addition of white robes, salt, lights, exorcism, renunciation, unction, crossing, and other graceful and significant though in the aggregate cumbrous forms, probably came in by degrees during the post-Apostolic period. As in the case of Circumcision, the performance of this rite was not confined to the higher orders of the Ministry. It is possible that it was performed for the most part by immersion. Of this, however, there is no sufficient proof.

*The Lord's Supper.*

*The Agape.*

*The Kiss of Peace.*

The Breaking of Bread, in which bread and wine, the universal symbols of nourishment and refreshment, were consecrated as means of spiritual growth, was celebrated commonly on the first day of the week, and in strict conformity with the original Divine Institution. Apostles and Presbyters were ministers of this sacrament. The *Agape*, or Love-feast, was at first, perhaps, celebrated with it. As there was danger, however, of confusion arising from this practice, the two were separated; and the custom grew up of having the one in the morning and the other in the evening. The Agape, in fact, was not merely a symbol of the charity of believers. It became in many places an actual daily meal, at which the poorer brethren partook of the bounty of the rich. It was a memento of that Pentecostal season when believers lived as brothers and had all things common. It was easily abused, however, and finally had to be done away. Like the kindred ceremony, "the kiss of peace," it continued just long enough to show that even Apostolic customs may be perverted; that the choicest plants, by neglect, may degenerate into weeds.

The Laying on of Hands, as a seal of special gifts, was known to the ancient Patriarchs, who thereby confirmed the blessing of the birthright; was practised by Moses when he ordained Joshua his successor; and was sanctioned by our Lord for acts of healing or of blessing. In all these senses it was continued by the Apostles.[2] They laid hands on all who had been baptized—a seal of the spiritual birthright, as well as of such special "gifts" as the Spirit dispensed to each. In this respect it has been aptly termed a kind of lay-ordination, a setting apart to that "kingly priesthood" inherent in all believers. It was also the usual rite of ordination proper. Mission, also, was given in this way.[3] Being eminently a symbol of the kingly office, it was commonly exercised, in conformity with patriarchal precedent, by the highest order of the Ministry: Presbyters, however, concurring and taking part.[4]

*The Laying on of Hands.*

Unction, a favorite Eastern symbol of the healing and joy-inspiring work of the Spirit, is often alluded to in the New Testament. It was employed, at least by the Jewish Christian Church, in the visiting of the sick.[5] There is no proof, however, that it was during the first century made a part of ordinary ritual. At a later period it was added both to Baptism and to the Laying on of Hands.

*Unction.*

Of the ordinary accessories of public worship, the Church inherited from the Temple and Synagogue an abundant store of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. These, with the Lord's Prayer, with the simple baptismal formula of faith, with the solemn celebration of the Lord's Supper and the Love-feast, with readings from the Old Testament and the New, with exercises of the charismata, and with such special prayers as were occasionally prompted by particular inspiration, gave sufficient variety of occupation to devout hearts and minds. That the inspired and rapt utterances of this period melted into air, benefiting only a single generation, is not altogether probable. It is at least possible that the unrivalled and inimitable

*Public Worship.*

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[2] Gen. xlviii. 14; Numb. xxvii. 20–23; Mark, vii. 32; xvi. 18; Acts, viii. 19; Heb. vi. 2.

[3] Acts, xiii. 3.

[4] 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

[5] James, v. 14.

*Liturgy.*

beauty of Liturgic language derived its peculiar bloom from Pentecostal times.[6] In every age devout feeling can clothe itself in words more or less appropriate. It is not in every age, however, that it has power to crystallize into imperishable gems. This belongs rather to an age of religious and poetic inspiration. If we may judge from the descriptions of heavenly worship in the Apocalypse, or from the peculiar solemnity with which the antecedents and concomitants of the Institution of the Lord's Supper are given in the Gospel of S. John, the mind of that great Apostle was eminently liturgical; and to him, probably, we are indebted for many of the devout utterances which still resound in all languages from the one end of Christendom to the other.[7]

*Hours of Prayer.*

*Fasts, Feasts.*

*Lord's Day.*

*Places.*

Hours of prayer probably accorded with those in use among the Jews, though straitened circumstances soon led to nocturnal or "antelucan" meetings. Easter and Pentecost, with a Fast of greater or less duration just before Easter, soon came to be observed. Fasting and prayer preceded ordinations. The Lord's Day took the place of the Sabbath, though the latter continued to be respected by Oriental Christians. Places of prayer were upper rooms, or private houses, given or loaned for the purpose. The distinction, however, between the House of God[8] and private residences was not suffered to be forgotten.

*Observances.*

As questions of propriety or of particular customs arose, the Apostles settled them on general principles, and sometimes in accordance with current maxims of the day.[9] They were careful to avoid the vice of excessive legislation. Virginity they tolerated, and even encouraged;[10] but always with the proviso that there should be a natural fitness for that state.

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[6] Specimens of Liturgic language are to be found all through the New Testament: *e.g.*, Luke, i. 46, 68; ii. 14, 29; Acts, iv. 24; Rom. xvi. 24; Rev. iv. 8; v. 9; xix. 1–7, etc.

[7] See Palmer, *Origines Liturgicæ;* Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, last volume; Thiersch, *Apostol. Ch.*

[8] 1 Cor. xi. 22.

[9] 1 Cor. xi. 1–16.

[10] 1 Cor. vii.

*Asceticism.*

Ascetic observances were in like manner allowed; but with a strict understanding that these things should in nowise interfere with liberty of conscience.[11] So far was this respect for private judgment carried, that S. Paul did not even enforce the decree of the Council at Jerusalem, with regard to meats offered to idols,[12] as an absolute law. He preferred that in all such matters men should judge for themselves.

*Morals.*

The morals of the Apostolic Church were framed, of course, on the Sermon on the Mount, or on the example of the life of Jesus Christ. By the help of persecution, and in the freshness of first love, there was perhaps a more general approximation to this high standard than Christendom has since exhibited. A community, however, just rescued from the stews of idolatry, and which lived in a moral atmosphere reeking with heathen abominations, was subject to terrible lapses at times, followed by gusts of passionate repentance.[13] In such cases delinquents were cut off from communion, but not from hope.[14] The Christians in Corinth were either worse than in other places, or being more tenderly loved by S. Paul were more sharply reprehended. In the Jewish Christian Church, and in many of the Churches in Asia Minor, there was a rapid decline. It is to be observed, however, that the light which reveals the faults of that period is the pure white light of uncompromising truth; and that many of the sins into which Christians fell were such as the best heathen hardly considered sins at all. What S. Paul looked upon as abominable, Cato would have regarded as natural and proper.

*Social Problems.*

With social and political problems the Church did not concern itself. Taking the framework of society as it was, it aimed to introduce into the relations of rulers and subjects, fathers and children, husbands and wives, masters and slaves, the golden rule of charity. This being present, society would regulate itself. This being absent, no mechanical readjustment would answer a good purpose. Such absolute indifference to political theories in a movement so mighty, so deep, so intellectual as Christianity, is one of the most remarkable features of its early progress. Regarding each relation of life as a particular divine calling, it infused, however, a new element into each. Celibacy was to be hallowed by special devotion to God's service. Marriage was to be elevated by embracing it in the spirit of the Lord's union with the Church. Masters and slaves, as brethren, were to serve one another. High and low, rich and poor, bond and free, were all to be regarded as pilgrims in this world, journeying to one end, running one race, looking forward to one prize; for the final attainment of which the worst position in life has, in some respects, advantages over the best.[15]

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[11] Rom. xiv. [12] 1 Cor. x. 18–33. [13] 2 Cor. vii. 11.

[14] The case of *Ananias and Sapphira* was an instance of divine severity; not, as is sometimes represented, of Church discipline.

*All Relations hallowed.*

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[15] 1 Cor. vii. 17, 20, 29–31; Luke, vi. 20. The *Therapeutæ,* according to Philo Judæus, on the ground that "nature has created all men free," regarded "the possession of slaves as wholly contrary to nature," and lived on terms of mutual equality in all things. Menial offices were performed by them in turns.

# BOOK II.

## AGE OF MARTYRS AND DOCTORS:

FROM

THE DEATH OF S. JOHN

TO THE

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL.

A.D. 100–232

L. of C.

# Book II.

## CHAPTER I.

### BEGINNING OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

In the history of the Church, as indeed in all history, there are from time to time certain half hours, as it were, of silence in Heaven; certain seasons of unpretending but fruitful preparation for the opening of the seals of a new order of events.

*A Season of Silent Growth.*

Such a season occurred during the latter end of the first century and the beginning of the second, when S. John either in person or in spirit was still presiding over the Churches of Asia Minor. As compared with the outgoing vigor of the Pentecostal age, it was an interval of silence—of quiet and obscure, though indefatigable industry in carrying on the work previously begun. Though much was done and much suffered, little was originated during this period. Concentration, not expansion, was the order of the day. Few enterprises were undertaken, few brilliant minds arose. The mighty leaders of the Pentecostal age had, with one or two exceptions, departed to their rest; and those who came into their place, being well content to labor upon other men's foundations, and in their doctrine having little need or wish to depart from the exact words of Apostolic teaching, left but scanty traces of their lives for history to record.

Christianity, indeed, presented such a picture at this time as that suggested by our Lord in one of the most striking and mysterious of His parables of the Kingdom. The soil of heathenism having been duly broken up, and the seed cast in, the great Sower had gone His way, and was slumbering, as it were: the seed, the meanwhile, springing and growing up, no one noticed how. Or, its general appearance might be likened to the quiet but steady process of the finishing of the Temple. The stones and timbers of the spiritual edifice had been hewn and shaped, each for its own appointed place, by inspired Master-builders. What remained for those immediately coming after was with noiseless industry to go on in the line made ready to their hands, and to carry out the plan which had been divinely set before them.

*The Seed growing in secret.*

*The Temple rising in silence.*

It was, in short, a kind of breathing spell between two periods of extraordinary energy and activity in the Church. The sun had set upon a great and busy day of missionary zeal; it was destined soon to rise upon an equally busy day of polemical excitement. In the interval between there is a veil upon the Churches; under which, as we learn from the results, there was a vigorous life working, but through which it is impossible to discern aught, save here and there the figure of a Watchman or a Witness: a mere token to posterity that the remarkable stillness of the period was not of death, but of growth.

*A breathing spell.*

S. John departed to his rest about the beginning of the century; S. Clement of Rome, and S. Symeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem, a little while later. In the great Province of Syria, S. Ignatius kept alive the teaching, and exercised "the gift," which more than thirty years previously he had received from the three chief Apostles. In Asia Minor, S. Polycarp was treasuring the sacred lore which sixty years afterwards he transmitted to a new era of the Church. So, in other parts, a few witnesses remained to testify of the wonders of Apostolic times.[1] Ammias and Quadratus were

*S. John and other Witnesses.*

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[1] Euseb. *Ecc. Hist.* iii. 37–39.

reverenced as Prophets. Others were still known for evangelic gifts. There were doubtless others also, such as Papias the Millenarian, who corrupted the tradition they had received from the Apostles, and fostered a secret undergrowth of superstition and false doctrine.

*Evangelists, Prophets.*

The profligate Domitian, whose name is connected with the second of the general Persecutions—whose rage, however, spent itself indifferently upon Jews, philosophers, and every one that had a claim to any sort of merit—was succeeded by Nerva; and he towards the end of the first century by the virtuous Trajan.

*Domitian.*

*Nerva,* A.D. 98.

The latter was induced by his reverence, real or pretended, for the gods of the Empire, to give ear to the vile calumnies which continued to be circulated against his Christian subjects, and to indulge, if not to foster, the spirit of persecution. The secrecy forced upon believers by the frivolity as well as cruelty of the world around, afforded undoubtedly a handle against them. What innocence wore for a veil, might easily be assumed as a mask for guilt. Few heathen magistrates would distinguish between the holy rites of the Gospel and the foul abominations of Gnostic sects, when both were covered over with the same impenetrable cloud.[2] Trajan seems to have taken no pains to inquire into the distinction. By renewing certain edicts, almost become obsolete, against secret societies and assemblies, he gave full scope to the rage of the rabble;[3] so that wherever Christians came together for worship, they were liable to be seized, put to the torture, and summarily condemned, as enemies of the State and despisers of the majesty of the Emperor.

*Trajan.*

*Third General Persecution.*

*Secret Societies.*

It was under these circumstances that Pliny the Younger,[4] being appointed Governor of Bithynia, a province evangelized in Apostolic times, undertook for a while to carry out the law in all its rigor. He became convinced, however, that the task he had assumed was beyond his strength. To put all the Christians to death was to run a risk of depopulating large portions of his province. He found, moreover, that the veil of secrecy in which the Christians enshrouded their sacred rights, covered nothing capable of a criminal construction. The temples of the gods, indeed, were beginning to be deserted, and victims had almost ceased to be offered upon their altars. Christianity was becoming the prevalent religion.[5] But as to its votaries, Pliny, on diligent inquiry, having examined certain apostates who volunteered their evidence, and having put to the torture two deaconesses,[6] could learn nothing against them, except, as he expressed it, their perverse and extravagant superstition. They meet before sunrise, he writes, on a certain day. They sing hymns responsively to one another in praise of Christ as God.[7] They bind themselves together by a *sacrament;* not, however, for any criminal purpose, but as a mutual pledge against theft, adultery, breach of trust, and the like: all which being ended, they break up for a while, and afterwards reassemble for a sociable and innocent repast.

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[2] On the state of the Roman law with regard to persecution, see Jeremie, *Hist. of the Christian Church*, ch. ii. and notes; also ch. i. § 3.

[3] Eusebius attributes this persecution to popular fury. *History*, lib. iii. 32.

[4] The genuineness of these letters of Pliny has been disputed, but is admitted by the great majority of learned writers. See Lardner's *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, and Gierig's edition of Pliny the Younger (tom. ii.

*Pliny the Younger,* A.D. 104-110.

*Decay of Heathen Worship.*

*Christian Worship.*

So Pliny wrote to the Emperor—an accurate, though somewhat meagre outline of Christian life and worship. The term *sacramentum,* which he employs to designate the chief act of communion, is a word of large meaning, covering anything from a simple verbal oath, in the modern sense,

*Term Sacrament.*

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498–519); also Gieseler, § 33, n. 7. Pliny's questions to the Emperor were (1) whether any distinction of sex, age, etc., should be made; (2) whether place of penitence should be allowed; (3) whether the mere *name* of Christian should be punished, or some crime should be proven; (4) whether any search was to be made for them.

[5] Lucian, *Pseudomant.* 25, represents the false prophet as complaining that "Pontus was full of atheists and Christians."

[6] "Ex duabus ancillis quæ *ministræ* dicebantur."

[7] "Carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem."

to the most elaborate and impressive ceremonial. Pliny's account, therefore, drawn as it was from the reluctant confessions of persons under torture, though correct as to the general order of Church customs in his day, is of very little value with regard to particulars. These were probably concealed; or, if they were divulged, Pliny was not a man to think them worth mentioning in a formal communication to the Emperor.

*Good Conduct of the Christians.*

For the rest, the candid and philosophic governor freely bore witness to the general good conduct of the persecuted sect, and to their peaceable behavior.[8] The vigorous measures, however, which he had pursued against them, were not without effect. Many, under the pressure of persecution, dissembled their belief. The assemblies for worship were less frequently held, or more carefully concealed. The heathen gods began once more to be honored by obsequious crowds.[9] On the other hand, the Emperor, somewhat mollified by the representations of Pliny, allowed the persecution to assume a milder form. None should be punished, he decreed, but those regularly convicted; anonymous accusations should be rejected; those who were brought to trial by responsible accusers, might be allowed to clear themselves by worshipping the gods; but for such as remained quiet, there should be no rigorous inquiry.

*Trajan relents.*

*Believers still molested.*

The effect of this decree was to blunt somewhat the edge of persecution. But when such a man as Pliny could regard the conscientious firmness of believers as an offence worthy of the rack, and when such an Emperor as Trajan could sanction capital punishment in cases which he deemed undeserving of serious inquiry,[10] there could be no lack of informers on the one hand, or of unjust judges on the other, to procure accusations and convictions, and to keep the sword continually suspended over the heads of at least the chief leaders of the Church. Many suffered at the hands of the populace. *Symeon, Justus,* A.D. *(about)* 107. Some were put to death by the order of Trajan himself. Among others, Symeon the second Bishop of Jerusalem has been already mentioned. His successor, Justus, likewise obtained the martyr's crown.

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[8] This testimony was the more reliable from the fact that it was drawn in part from persons who had apostatized "some *three* years, and one or two *twenty* years before."

[9] Pliny inferred from this that a great number of Christians might be won over from their faith, if "place of repentance" were given.

[10] Tertullian vehemently censures the Emperor on this account. *Apologet.* ii. Mosheim apologizes for Trajan, but the defence is an extremely lame one;

But the flower of the noble army of witnesses for Christ at this period was found in the person of S. Ignatius, surnamed *Ignatius of Antioch.* Theophorus, the Apostolic Bishop of the Church of Antioch.[11] He was a well-known disciple of the Apostle S. John. Associated for a while with S. Euodius, whom he succeeded in the year sixty-eight, and holding the Mother See of the Church in Syria, he was virtually the head, or, as S. Chrysostom styles him, the Apostle of that important province. As such he became a shining mark for the arrows of persecution.

The precise time of his martyrdom has been much disputed, some placing it in the ninth, others in the nineteenth year of *Before Trajan,* A.D. 116. the reign of Trajan. It is only known that Trajan, elated with his victories over the Scythians and Dacians, and about to engage in an expedition in the East, halted at Antioch on his way, and showed a disposition to afflict the Christians. The Bishop, with a noble anxiety to shield his flock, fearlessly repaired to the imperial presence. Trajan said to him: "What cacodæmon (that is, ill-starred wretch) art thou, engaged in perverting other people?" Ignatius answered: *Theophorus.* "None can call Theophorus cacodæmon, for the dæmons keep away from the servants of God. But if thou callest me cacodæmon because I am hos-

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attributing his "inconsistency" to fear of "the priests and the multitude," and not to "superstition." *Comment.* vol. i. 8, etc. Neander defends him on somewhat better grounds.

[11] S. Clement. Rom., S. Ignat., S. Polycarp., Patrum Apostol., etc. Oxon. 1838.

tile to the dæmons, I confess it. Having Christ the King of Heaven on my side, I dispel their snares." Trajan said: "What is the meaning of Theophorus?" Ignatius replied: "One who bears Christ in his heart." "But," said the Emperor, "do not we in that sense bear the gods, who fight with us against our enemies?" Ignatius answered: "The dæmons of the Gentiles are no gods. There is but one God, who made heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is therein; and one Christ Jesus, His only begotten Son, whose kingdom may I attain!" The sentence of death soon followed: "We command Ignatius, who says he bears about the Crucified with him, to be conducted to Rome by a military guard; there to be thrown to wild beasts as a spectacle for the people."

*His Sentence.*

That the fact of his punishment might be as widely known as the noble victim himself, he was taken to the city by the longest way. The result was very different from what the Emperor probably intended. It enabled the Martyr to give an example of faith and courage much needed at that time for the feebler class of believers.[12] Everywhere met by troops of zealous friends, he vindicated his claim to the title Theophorus, and to his own noble maxim, "My love hath been crucified." A Divine influence accompanied him from city to city. In his person the Cross seemed to be again uplifted. Everywhere he took care to season his conversation with salt, writing epistles to the Churches, dropping words of hope and comfort upon the multitudes who thronged to see him, calling his chains his spiritual jewels, and enlivening the gravity of his discourses with a chaste vivacity peculiarly his own. In this latter respect, S. Ignatius was among the sprightliest as well as

*His Journey.*

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[12] The "fears" of Ignatius for his flock were probably not a mere dread of the sufferings they might have to undergo, but an anxiety lest they should *fall away*. For all Christians were not equally courageous. Such occasional examples as that of Ignatius were necessary, no doubt, to nerve the faith and courage of the more timid crowd. This being considered, the eagerness for martyrdom displayed by this noble confessor is defensible on rational grounds. When Polycarp suffered, a half century later, circumstances were different and a different course was advisable.

holiest of martyrs. From his adamantine soul, as the Greeks describe it, the waters of an almost playful fancy were continually welling up. His military guard he compared to "ten leopards," which, the kinder he was to them, became only the more wanton. The jaws of the lions which awaited him in the Roman Amphitheatre he regarded as a mill which was to grind his wheat into an offering of fine flour unto the Lord. With sallies of this kind, with stirring exhortations, with grave advice, and with a face which the ancients describe as radiant with joy, he made his journey to the great Metropolis a genuine Christian ovation.

*His Sallies.*

He was thrown to the lions in the Roman Amphitheatre on the great popular Feast of the Saturnalia. The whole city flocked together on such occasions. It was providentially ordered, therefore, that when the courageous old man descended into the arena, he was, more conspicuously than any of the martyrs before or after him, "a spectacle unto the whole world, even to angels and to men." Long before his arrival at Rome, he had had the consolation of learning that his Church, which he had committed to the special charge of his friend Polycarp, was no longer subject to persecution.

*Final Scene.*

Of his body, torn and mangled by the lions, a few relics are said to have been collected by the diligence of his friends.[13] The nobler legacy that he left to posterity in his famous Epistles, has been more severely handled. In such portions, however, as have survived the fury of a long and searching controversy,[14] whether we take the seven Epistles com-

*His Remains.*

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[13] In his Epistle to the Romans, he expresses a hope that nothing might be left to be a trouble to his friends: that he might *disappear* to the world to appear with Christ: that he might *set* to the world to rise with Christ.

[14] The asperity of certain critics towards this father does not seem to have abated, if one may judge from two recent examples. The first is Bunsen. The word Sige, it appears—a Valentinian Gnostic term for God—in the Epistle to the Trallians, was for a long while considered an anachronism, and was used as an argument against the genuineness of the Epistle. The recent discovery of the works of Hippolytus has proved that the term was used by Simon Magus: the anachronism and the argument, therefore, fall to the

monly received, or the briefer fragments of the Syriac translation, there are unmistakable marks of his character and genius. Their freshness and originality is such as we find in no other of the Apostolic fathers. The style is terse, sparkling, and sententious. With allusions everywhere to the sense of Holy Scripture, but with few literal quotations, and possessing to a remarkable degree that quickness of spiritual discernment which *hearkens*, as he happily expresses it, *to the silence of Jesus*, Ignatius wrote with a soul still moist with the morning dew of the first outpouring of the Spirit. Between the age of inspiration and the era of reflective and discursive thought which marked the latter half of the century, he is one of the most valuable of the connecting links.

*His Position.*

The testimony he bore to the doctrine and discipline of his

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ground. Bunsen is forced to acknowledge this; but instead of candidly confessing the error, he turns upon Bishop Pearson for contending (as he had a right to do before the recent discoveries) that Ignatius used the word in the ordinary sense, and not in the Gnostic. See B.'s *Hippol.* vol. i. p. 59. The second instance is Dr. Schaff. The latter acknowledges the genuineness of the seven Epistles; but, wishing to find fault somewhere, accuses the noble martyr of "something offensive," because he exhorts his friend Polycarp to be "more studious, . . . . more zealous, . . . . *and to flee the arts of the Devil.*" Dr. Schaff forgets that mutual exhortation was by early Christians considered a duty, and that Bishops were as willing to be warned against "the arts of the Devil" as the humblest catechumen. In the same way, the martyr's earnestly expressed wish that the Romans would not seek to save him from martyrdom, but would rather *pray for him that he might be found a sacrifice to God*, is set down as "boisterous impatience and morbid fanaticism." That the prospect of being eaten by lions may have had a stimulating effect upon the holy Bishop's imagination, and that he may have expressed his willingness to suffer somewhat more warmly than if he had written quietly in his study, I can readily conceive. But to characterize this generous warmth as "boisterous impatience and morbid fanaticism" is to war against every noble impulse of the human heart. Writings more free than the Ignatian Epistles from fanaticism, and from every other kind of bitterness, can nowhere be found. See *Antient Syriac Version*, etc., by W. Cureton, M.A. For a summary of the argument in favor of the *Seven Epistles*, see Prof. Blunt's *Lectures* on the *History of the First Three Centuries;* also Dr. Schaff's *History of the Church.*

times is found in all copies of his writings, and is therefore not affected by the critical objections which have been made to portions of the text. On the subject of Episcopacy his language is decisive. The proper Divinity of the Son of God, the reality of the Incarnation, and the anti-Gnostic maxim that even things done in the body are spiritual if done in the Lord, are expressed with equal force and precision. The hortatory parts of the Epistles reveal a state of things in the Churches differing little from what existed when Timothy received his instructions from S. Paul. The widows continued to be the special charge of the chief Pastor. Masters and slaves, husbands and wives, are to grow in grace by faithful performance of their duties to one another. Marriage is honored; virginity is moderately commended.[15] With the exception, in short, of a brief and obscure allusion to Satan's supposed ignorance of some of the mysteries of the Incarnation, everything in these writings is indicative of an age of simple faith, averse to speculation, averse to innovation, and jealously conservative of truth and order, in the letter and spirit of them both.

*His witness to Doctrine and Discipline.*

With the remarkable witness of Pliny and Ignatius—the one a heathen philosopher, the other a Christian Bishop, but both testifying to the vigor of Christianity at this comparatively unrecorded period of its history—we pass with rapid steps to an epoch which more completely lifts the veil of obscurity and silence, opening the seals of a new era of Church life, and showing the seeds of good and evil, which had been springing the meanwhile in the full luxuriance of their growth.

*Two Witnesses.*

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[15] The much abused phrase, *Nothing without the Bishop*, is used chiefly in this connection; namely, that in undertaking the two most critical and momentous of all engagements—virginity and marriage—young persons should not think themselves wiser than their Pastors. S. Ignatii *Ep. ad Polycarp.* 5.

# CHAPTER II.

## HADRIAN AND THE ANTONINES.

THE ablest and wisest Emperors were not by any means the most favorable to Christianity. Trajan is known in history as the third of the Persecutors. Under Hadrian his successor, a philosophic prince of varied talents and virtues—whose virtue, however, seems to have possessed him as a spirit of unrest—things were but little altered for the better. Persecution was continually breaking out in one place or another. But the severity with which it was conducted depended mainly upon the temper of the mob, and the greater or less zeal of the provincial magistrates.

*Fourth Persecution.* A.D. 117-138.

It is of little use to look for recondite reasons for the injustice, or indifference, of these politically wise Emperors towards their Christian subjects. The Church undoubtedly was becoming a great power. It was felt, moreover, to be a power of change. The more thoughtful magistrates, in proportion as they were patriotic and religious in the heathen sense, were nervously alive to the importance of this fact; and of course the more alive, as Christianity was to them an incomprehensible, and, some of them half suspected, an irrepressible phenomenon. Yet they were by no means settled in their judgment, or consistent in their course. As a man, about to be overtaken by the flow of a great tide, first notices with indifference a pool here or there forming stealthily in the sands, but at last, when he sees the pools enlarging and rapidly multiplying, is awakened to his danger, and now ad-

*Progress of the Gospel.*

*Gradual.*

vances, now retreats, the hostile element confronting him whichever way he turns: such was the position, and such the policy of the magistrates of the Empire, in dealing with Christianity. Mere superstitions they could easily have tolerated with Roman magnanimity. But Christianity, they saw, was no common superstition. Nor was it a violent enthusiasm, sweeping with foaming and threatening front along a measurable channel. What was infinitely more perplexing, it was singularly quiet, singularly peaceable, singularly gradual in its advance. It came in as a growth: it rose as a Solway tide.[1] Indeed, so uniform was its progress in all parts of the Roman world, so simultaneous in places far remote from one another, that whether it was rising upon society, or society was sinking into it, was a question that the philosophy of the times found it difficult to answer. There were many who looked upon it, therefore, as a sort of mysterious epidemic. And it was this mystery, in fact, this evidence of power without any of the pomp and circumstance of power, that baffled the counsels of the Emperors, and entangled them in a policy as futile as it was unjust.

*As a Growth.*

*As a Tide.*

It is true, however, that there were Christians who gave needless offence, by the display of an inordinate desire of martyrdom. When Arrius Antoninus,[2] probably about this period, opened his tribunal in Asia for accusations against them, they voluntarily came forward in such numbers, that the governor, veiling his humanity under an appearance of contempt, was forced to drive them away. There are ropes

*Inordinate Zeal.*

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[1] The steady increase of Christians in all ranks of society was a common talk among the heathen; and the somewhat exaggerated expressions of the Apologists to that effect are often put in the mouths of the enemies of the Gospel. Thus Tertullian: "*Men cry out* that the state is beset, that the Christians are in their fields, in their forts, in their islands. They mourn, as for a loss, that every sex, age, condition, and now even every rank is going over to this sect." *Apologet.* i. For numerous references to passages bearing on this subject, see Oxf. *Translation of Tertull.* p. 3, note g.

[2] Tertull. *ad Scap.* 5. There would seem to have been two of the name of Arrius; the one under Hadrian, the other in the times of Commodus.

enough, said he, to hang yourselves with, if life is such a burden to you.

*Fanaticism general.*

But such displays on the part of a certain class, were symptoms of a distemper, which, at this time, pervaded all orders of men, and, in a measure, all forms of religion. The decay of Heathenism was filling the world with wild dreams. Fanaticism abounded. The Carpocratians and other Gnostic or semi-heathen sects, made their meetings the scenes of abominable orgies. The Jews were in a ferment of religious wars. They had rejected their true Messiah; but the vision of a Messiah, ever present to their minds, had become a great stone, as it were, that was perpetually falling on them and grinding them to powder. Under Trajan, they had perpetrated a horrible massacre of the Gentiles in Egypt. Similar events had occurred in Libya, Cyrenaica, Cyprus, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. Under Hadrian, Bar Cochba claimed to be the Messiah, and furiously persecuted the Christians. In this rebellion, which terminated, as we have seen,[3] with the second overthrow of Jerusalem, more than six hundred thousand Jews are said to have perished; and by famine and other evils that followed, Judæa was almost depopulated. There was similar excitement among the Heathen. The Egyptians were running frantic over the supposed discovery of their bull-god, Apis.[4] Magical arts began to be revived; and to these, and even viler superstitions, the philosophic Emperor fell an easy victim. The worship that he instituted to his deified minion Antinous made him an object of contempt to the very heathen.

*The Jews.*

A D. 115.

A.D. 135.

*The Heathen.*

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if the Christians, partly from being somewhat infected with the evil spirit of the times, partly from being confounded with wretches who assumed the Name of Christ to profane it, and partly from a new edge being given to the malignity both of Jews and heathen, suffered in many ways not intended by the laws, and became more than ever the objects of popular violence. In the Martyrologies,[5] it is said that Faith, Hope, and Charity were among the sufferers of this time, being put to death at Rome, along with Wisdom, their mother. These holy sisters, the martyrs of every age, had doubtless begun to suffer then. Besides them, however, there seem to have been victims of a more tangible description, in Italy, Sardinia, Greece, Palestine, and all the provinces of the East.[6]

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[3] Book I. ch. vii. See Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iii. 2, 6.

[4] Spartianus *de Api;* Euseb. *de Præparat.* ii. 11.

*Faith, Hope, and Charity.*

It was during Hadrian's reign that Quadratus, Bishop of Athens,[7] wrote an Apology for the Christians, and presented it to the Emperor. He was a disciple of the Apostles (many of whose miracles he had seen with his own eyes), and a distinguished Evangelist and Prophet. Becoming Bishop of Athens, he labored with great success in reëstablishing the Church, which, in that part of Greece, had fallen into decay. Hadrian, visiting the city in the course of his endless travels, was equally intent upon reviving heathenism.[8] He seems, however, to have treated the venerable Apologist with all due respect. The memorial presented by Quadratus on this occasion, and a similar discourse written by Aristides a converted philosopher, were

*Quadratus, Evangelist and Bishop.*

*Hadrian in Athens.*

*Aristides.*

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[5] Martyrolog. Roman. *August.* i.

[6] The number of Martyrs at various periods is a subject that has been much discussed, to little or no purpose. The extremes (*i. e.*, the *reasonable* extremes) are represented by Dodwell, *Disertat. Cyprian.* xi. and Ruinart. *Acta Martyr. Selecta et Sincera; Prefat.* Most modern writers take the mean between these—a process more easy than satisfactory.

[7] Euseb. iv. 3; iii. 37.

[8] He was there initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Hadrian's active mind being superstitious, as well as philosophic, I can see no improbability in the story of Lampridus (*Alex. Severus,* xxiv.) that he erected some temples *without statues*, with a view to admit Christ among the Roman gods. The same feeling that induced the Athenians to have an altar to "the unknown God" may have suggested such a course; but when he found the priests opposed to it, his reverence for the established religion (Spartian. *Vit Hadrian.* xxii.) made him desist.

highly esteemed by the Christians, and are said to have had some effect upon the mind of the Emperor.

*Edict against Informers.*

A greater effect was produced by a letter from Serenius Granianus, Proconsul of Asia Minor, representing to the Emperor the injustice of allowing Christians to be put to death on a mere popular outcry. Other governors had made similar complaints. Hadrian replied by a famous letter to Minucius Fundanus,[9] successor of Granianus, in which he forbids any one to be put to death, except in due course of law, and orders that false accusers should be rigorously judged and punished.

*Antoninus Pius,* A.D.138–161.

Antoninus Pius, Hadrian's successor, is said to have renewed this favorable edict, and seems to have done his utmost to have it honestly enforced. He was moved to this by his own humane disposition, and possibly by an apology of Justin, the philosopher and martyr. Beyond occasional outbreaks of fanaticism, therefore, in consequence of a long series of public calamities,[10] the Christians were little troubled in the exercise of their religion. Indeed, the sufferings they were called to endure were hardly more than were necessary to draw a line betwixt them and the Gnostic sects ; the latter, as a general rule, not caring enough for the Name of Christ to bear persecution for it.

*Marcus Aurelius,* A.D.161–180.

*Hostile to the Gospel.*

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus was, as Gibbon has described him, "of a severer and more laborious kind of virtue" than his amiable predecessor. "He embraced the rigid system of the Stoics, which taught him to submi this body to his mind, his passions to his reason ; to consider virtue as the only good, vice as the only evil, all things external as things indifferent." To his subjects in general, he was just and beneficent. But, unfortunately for the peace of the Christians, their religion was particularly offensive to Stoic pride. The imperial sophist might declaim of the happy frame of mind which enables one to await annihilation with a stern composure. A Christian would merely pity such rigidity of soul. Man is not made for a leaden and passionless immobility: he is benevolently created for life and hope. Not suppression of the affections, but their proper cultivation, is the rule of duty. Not annihilation, but a blissful resurrection—not death, but life—is the doctrine to inspire true courage, true patience, true temperance, true virtue of every kind.

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[9] Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* iv. 9.

[10] Famines, inundations, earthquakes, fires. Jul. Capitolin. *Vita Antonin. Pii*, ix.

*That Stoic Ideal.*

Marcus Aurelius felt this antagonism between his own philosophy and the faith of his Christian subjects.[11] "It is admirable," says he, "that the soul should be prepared for whatever may await her: to be extinguished, to be dispersed, or whatever else may happen. But prepared, I say, not with mere obstinacy, like that of the Christians, not with an idle show of joy, but in a grave, considerate, reasonable manner, so as to make a serious impression on the minds of other people." Judging Christian hope from the stand-point of stoicism, he considered it a mere affectation. Besides this, the Gospel, as he could not fail to see, imparted a peculiar power. Under its inspiration, not the perfect man merely, not *the king* in the stoic sense, but women and children, and even slaves, could face the great terror undismayed. In this respect, philosophy had begun to feel itself rebuked. About the time of the Emperor's accession, a hardened wretch of the name of Peregrinus,[12] who, in the course of a bad life, had been successively parricide, Christian, priest, confessor, and finally an apostate from the faith and a professor of Cynicism, attempted to prop the failing credit of philosophy by burningh imself publicly at the Olympic games. An immense crowd was present. Some laughed, some admired. Contrary, perhaps, to the expectation of Peregrinus, none had the humanity to interfere. After many delays and tremors, he threw himself at length into the devouring element. The act was indeed but a vile caricature of Christian self-devotion. It shows a point, however, in which philosophy felt its own deficiency. Where Stoicism could boast of an occasional suicide, Christianity could point to an unfailing succession of Martyrs. This being the case, there was no course left for a man of discernment like the Emperor, but either to embrace the Gospel, or to treat it as an enthusiasm dangerous to the peace of his subjects, and to the welfare of the State.

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[11] Neander (*Ch. Hist.* i. ii.) calls attention to a "childlike piety," which the Emperor had imbibed from his mother, and which sometimes led him to the expression of the noblest sentiments, and sometimes involved him in abject superstition. A strong religious feeling of this kind must have been terribly galled at times by the artificial stoicism in which he had tried to encase it; and the irritation thence arising may account for his peculiar hostility to the Christians. To hate a thing cordially, there must be a certain amount of sympathy with it.

[12] Lucian, *De Morte Peregrini.*

*The Cynic Martyr.*

*Three Types of the Age.*

Among the numerous sufferers of this reign there are three names so distinguished, and so typical of certain phases of the Church life of the age, as to demand for each a separate and particular account.

*Polycarp.*

*Pothinus.*

*Justin Martyr.*

Polycarp, the disciple of John, the bosom friend of Ignatius, and for threescore years the trusted depository of Apostolic tradition, is the representative of an age of simple faith, observant of the old landmarks, but not much exercised as yet by "the oppositions of science," whether true or false. In Pothinus, a disciple of the same school, and in his companions the Lyonnese Martyrs, we observe the same devout faith, but with it all the symptoms of an age of sterner and more complicated trials. The war against heathenism from without is accompanied by a protest against the beginnings of heathenish corruptions from within. Justin, the Philosopher, Apologist, and Martyr, more fully represents this struggle, both outward and inward, as leaving the high ground of simple martyrdom, and descending into the dusty arena of philosophical, skeptical, and critical discussion.

And this was a necessary stage in the Church's progress here on earth. A religion which fails to satisfy the mind of man can never rise above the level of a popular superstition. *Transition Period.* The Church for awhile might be content to announce her message in the simple, pregnant phrases which appeal only to the few that have ears to hear. But this would not answer always. As St. Ignatius foresaw, on his way to martyrdom, other times were coming, with a demand for combatants who could speak face to face with all kinds of men; who, as skilful pilots, should be in readiness for winds from all quarters of the heavens; who, as athletes thoroughly trained, could stand like an anvil under repeated blows, knowing that to be smitten is as needful for the victory as the power to smite.[13] In proportion as we appreciate this truth we are prepared to do justice to three phases of Church life, which appeared successively, or rather grew one out of another, before the end of the second century. An age *Three Ages.* of simple witness bears within it an age of elaborate Apologetics; and this again developes into a confused and troublous era of religious discussion and polemical zeal.

As types of three aspects of this period of transition, the names of Polycarp, Pothinus, and Justin Martyr are entitled to the large place they hold in the early history of the Church.

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[13] S. Ignat. *ad Polycarp.* 2, 3.

# CHAPTER III.

## S. POLYCARP.

*Church in Smyrna.*

THE city of Smyrna, at the beginning of the second century, was hardly inferior to Ephesus in social and political importance. The Church established there at quite an early period had remained, as we infer from the Apocalypse, singularly uncorrupt; its Angel, rich in good works amid temporal poverty and affliction, having guarded it successfully against the arts of that semi-Jewish, semi-Gnostic philosophy, with which the Asiatic cities at that time, and for some while after, were more or less infected.[1]

*Polycarp.*

Whether the Angel thus commended was the admirable Bishop subsequently so well known under the name of Polycarp, is matter of conjecture only.[2] Certain it is, however, that the saintly Bishop of the second century proved not unworthy of the eulogy pronounced upon the faithful Angel of the first. For twenty years or more the disciple of S. John, and the trusted friend of S. Ignatius, he first comes before us a sober pastor at the head of a well ordered flock, both "sheep and shepherd nailed to the cross of Christ," at the time when the Martyr of Antioch halted for a few days at Smyrna, on his memorable journey to Rome. The latter entrusted him with the dearest remaining care of his life. He was to have a fit head provided for the Church at Antioch; to write to all the Churches which

*The Shepherd and the Flock.*

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[1] Rev. ii. 8–10.

[2] The probabilities (from the age of Polycarp at the time of his death, etc.) are against the identity of the two.

Ignatius could not write to himself; and to do what else in his discretion might be found expedient.

*His Style and Character.*

His style, in the portion that remains of his excellent Epistle to the Philippians,[3] is in keeping with the sobriety and simplicity of his character. There is nothing in it of the terseness of Ignatius, that concentrated power which makes old thoughts crystallize into something new and rare. Holy Scripture is the staple of his writings. He quotes much,—quotes generally in the letter, and seems drawn along by the sacred text, as if he loved it too much to let it go his hold, or to break it off abruptly from any of its connections. Less brilliant than Ignatius, and perhaps with less claim to any "gift" of Divine illumination, he was eminently fitted for the providential end for which his life on earth seems to have been so extraordinarily prolonged. Not faithful merely, but literally and punctiliously faithful, conservative of jots and tittles, he was just the man for a *theodromos*, as Ignatius phrases it,[4]—a Divine message-bearer from the Apostolic age to a second and third generation of zealous witnesses to the Truth.

*A Theodrome.*

*Portrait by Irenæus.*

"It seems to me that I still hear him telling"—so writes Irenæus,[5] the most intellectual of the disciples of his school—"how he had conversed with S. John and other eye-witnesses of Jesus Christ; repeating the very words he had heard from their mouths, with many particulars of the miracles and doctrines of that divine Saviour, all of which was in closest conformity with what we learn from the Sacred Scriptures, from the writings, namely, of those who were themselves eye-witnesses of the Word of Life."

*Visit to Rome, A.D. 158.*

About the middle of the century, during the reign of Antoninus Pius, he made a visit to Rome, desirous of conference with Anicetus, then Bishop of that city. There he bore his testimony against Marcion, Carpocrates, and other heretics of the day. On the question already agitated in the Church—the practice, namely, of feasting like the Jews on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan[6]—he maintained the tradition of S. John and S. Philip against Anicetus and the Roman custom. Neither party had power to convince the other. Against the practice of S. John and S. Philip, the Romans alleged that of S. Peter and S. Paul. Neither Anicetus nor Polycarp seems to have dreamed of any authority vested in the Roman See by which the controversy might be once for all decided. They parted as they had met, in peace. And for nearly two centuries longer, the Christians of Asia Minor, with a firmness sufficiently vexatious at the time, but precious in after ages as a testimony to the primitive equality of the Churches, adhered to their tradition.

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[3] Patr. Apostol. Oxon. 1838. [4] Ad Polycarp. 7. [5] Apud. Euseb. v. 20.

*Two Traditions.*

In his martyr-death, as for so many years in his martyr-life, Polycarp was still the faithful theodrome; not running before, but with tranquil humility content to follow after, the will of God We have already had occasion to notice that, owing in part to continuous persecution, and in part to a contagious enthusiasm which the Church resisted but not with absolute success, the glory of witnessing for Christ was sometimes coveted by persons unworthy of the honor. Hence a needless asperity at times, or even a species of bravado, before the tribunals. Hence, among some, an actual courting or provoking of popular hatred. Hence, in short, many sore scandals to the Church. Early in the century the wretched Peregrinus had shown that one might stand up manfully as a confessor, in times of persecution, and yet be unable to keep his feet amid the fumes of subsequent applause. More recently a Phrygian of the name of Quintus had thrust himself forward as a volunteer for martyrdom; but as soon as he heard the lions roar he was ready to sacrifice to idols. Lapses of this kind, becoming more frequent as the Church increased in numbers, made it incumbent on pastors and leaders to set an example of a new kind of confessorship—the confessorship, namely, of a prudent circumspection: a thing vastly more difficult in stirring times than any other form of faith and courage.

*Excessive Zeal.*

*Volunteer Martyrs.*

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[6] For the Paschal question, see ch. ix. of this book.

The first demand for the sacrifice of Polycarp arose from the amphitheatre at Smyrna, on occasion, we are told, of the martyrdom of Germanicus with eleven other Christians of Philadelphia. These amphitheatres—huge mouths of hell as the Christians properly esteemed them, with their beast-fights and gladiator-shows, bubbling with all the lewd and cruel passions of the idolatrous rabble of great cities—were the recognized feeders of that blood-thirsty spirit which disgraced the civilization of the old Roman world; and so long as they were tolerated, were unfailing fountain-heads of new persecutions. There is a fearful description by S. Augustine[7] of the way the soul could be wrought on, and metamorphosed in these abominable dens. How horror stiffened into cruelty at the first sight of blood; how cruelty, amid the growls of lacerated brutes, and the cheers and jeers of monsters in human shape, elevated itself into a sort of demoniacal possession; how the shrinking novice of a few hours since, now "beheld, shouted, kindled," being magnetized, as it were, into a frenzy of mingled terror and delight: all this has been vividly portrayed, and to those who have observed the plastic nature of the soul is by no means difficult to imagine.

*The Circus.*

*Its Baleful Influence.*

Between the darkness of such scenes and the pure light of Christianity, there could be no sort of concord. Regarding them as the rallying-point of the dæmons whom the Gospel was dislodging from shrine and grove, believers looked upon them with an aversion not to be disguised. The hate, of course, was fully reciprocated. When the name of Polycarp, therefore, was uttered in the theatre of Smyrna, it was caught up at once, and resounded on every side. "Away with the atheists,[8] let Polycarp be brought!" It was a popular delirium, not to be resisted, not to be evaded.

*Polycarp called for.*

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[7] S. Augustine, *Confess.* vi. 8. On the subject of the indecency and barbarity of heathen shows, see Tertullian, *De Spectaculis.*

[8] "We are called Atheists," says Justin Martyr, "and so far as those called gods by the heathen are concerned, we plead guilty to the charge; but not so with regard to the only true God," etc. *Apol.* ii. 6.

*His Prudence.*

*His Dream.*

The saint, however, yielding to the urgency of his friends, withdrew for awhile from the reach of the infuriated crowd. In a retired country-seat, at no great distance from the city, he spent his time in prayers night and day for the welfare of the Churches, and tranquilly awaited the good pleasure of the Lord. Hunted from this place of refuge, he magnanimously yielded to entreaty and fled to another. Meanwhile he had had a vision in which his pillow appeared all in flames, and on the strength of it had foretold the kind of martyrdom he was called to undergo. Discovered in his second retreat, he said simply, "*The Lord's will be done,*" and gave himself up. Two hours were granted him for prayer, his captors the meanwhile regaling themselves with a collation, which the venerable Bishop, mindful to the last of the duty of hospitality, had been careful to provide.

*His Confession.*

On his way to the city he was overtaken by Herod the Irenarch and Nicetas his father, who took him up into their chariot, and tried to persuade him to call Cæsar Lord, and offer the sacrifice enjoined in such cases. He simply answered, I cannot do what you advise. Brought before Statius Quadratus the Proconsul, he was ordered to repeat the prayer for the destruction of the godless, which, being intended as an imprecation against the Christians, had become a gathering cry of the Smyrna rabble. But the language of the prayer was capable of a Christian interpretation. Polycarp, therefore, was content to repeat the words prescribed, looking up with beaming face towards Heaven. When commanded to curse Christ, he mildly answered, Fourscore and six years have I served Him, and He hath done me no ill: how then can I curse my King and Saviour? To the further demand, that he should swear by the Fortune of Cæsar, he replied that he was a Christian, the meaning of which name he was ready to explain, if the Proconsul would grant him a hearing.

Moved probably by a feeling of compassion, the Proconsul then advised him to plead his cause before the people. But Polycarp was not to be led into such a crooked course. He saw, what certain apologists for the Magistrates of that age are strangely blind to,[9] that men in authority had no right to put the sword committed to them into the hands of an irresponsible, blood-thirsty mob, and then to wash their hands, Pilate-like, as though they were innocent in the matter. Polycarp, doubtless, was well aware of this. To the soft words of the Proconsul, therefore, he replied with dignity and firmness: "Before you I am willing to make answer; for Princes and Magistrates are ordained of God, and we Christians are taught to render them the honor that is due: but with regard to the populace, they have no such claim, and I am under no obligation to plead before them."

*False Kindness.*

*Honor where due.*

The games at this time being over, Polycarp, according to his prediction, was condemned to the stake. The Christians of Smyrna, who witnessed and recorded the transaction, saw the flames gather around and enclose him as in a fiery pavilion, while a delicious perfume floated through the air.[10] As the fire did not reach him at once, some one, perhaps out of compassion, plunged a sword into his side. His friends gathered what could be found of his remains, and reverentially consigned them to a tomb. "There," they add, with a discriminating piety worthy of their saintly teacher, "we hope to assemble hereafter, and celebrate with joy the day of his martyrdom; not to worship him, however, as the Pagans say, but to contemplate the example he has set, and to learn, if needs be, to imitate it. As to worship, we can never abandon Jesus Christ. We worship Him because He is the Son of God. The martyrs we love and follow, because of the very great love they have shown for their King and Master."[11]

*His Martyrdom, A.D. 167–9.*

*Honors paid him.*

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[9] It is true, however, that many magistrates were ready to connive at the escape of Christians; perhaps most of them were, when believers could be induced to accept dishonorable modes of escape See Tertull. *Ad Scap.* iv.

[10] These facts, easily enough explained, do not seem to be mentioned as miracles, but merely as pleasing incidents; just as one notices a fine day on any special occasion, or any other welcome coincidence.

[11] *Ecclesiæ Smyrnensis de Martyrio S. Polycarpi Epistol. Circularis.* Patrum Apostol., etc.

Such was the end of Polycarp, a man full of years, full of fruit—the very embodiment of that quiet, conservative, order-loving spirit, which was eminently characteristic of the Churches of S. John. He left numerous disciples, many of whose names were recorded in the roll of Martyrs. It is said, in a doubtful passage of the Epistle which describes his death, that when the sword pierced his side, a dove[12] flew out of the wound and winged its way toward Heaven. The story is without value as a matter of fact; but, if it were true, there could be no better symbol of the change that was already taking place in the aspect of Christianity. The dove-like temper was already in large measure departed. A spirit not less needful for the times—a spirit of inquiry, agitation, and polemical discussion—was rapidly approaching in its place.

*Conservative Spirit.*

It is also said in the Epistle, that "he appeased the persecution; sealing it up, as it were, with his testimony." This applies, however, only to Smyrna and other cities of Asia. In Gaul, the persecution continued some years longer.

*Seal of the Persecution.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE LYONNESE MARTYRS.

FROM the tree planted by S. Paul and watered as we have seen for nearly a century by S. John and S. Polycarp, vigorous scions had sprung up on the distant banks of the Rhone, among the Græco-Gallic population of Lyons and Vienne.[1] The venerable Pothinus, a friend of Polycarp

*Gallic Church, A.D. (about) 140.*

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[12] This story is not found in all copies; and where it occurs, it has been ingeniously conjectured that *ep' aristera* (on the left) has been changed by transcribers into *peristera* (dove).

[1] It is probable enough that other foundations had been laid in Gaul prior to this, but nothing is known of them. See Lorenz. *Summ. Hist. Gallo-*

and of about the same age, left Asia, it is probable towards the middle of the century, and settling in Lyons became Bishop there. With him was a numerous and zealous band, among whom the name of Irenæus is most interesting to the modern reader. Under their auspices, the Church grew and flourished, as Churches then grew; making little noise in the world, and keeping scant record of itself for the benefit of posterity, till the blade and the ear had matured into the full corn, and the sickle of persecution was sent in to reap the first harvest.

*First Cry for Blood.* A.D. (*about*) 170–176.

As usual at this period, the first cry for blood was uttered among the brutalized rabble of the Amphitheatre. We learn from Tacitus how admirably the Province, as it was called, having been first vanquished by the power of the sword, was gradually tamed by the luxurious appliances—the baths, theatres, and temples—of the wise and wicked Circe of the Seven Hills. The history of Christianity is a proof that the taming was hardly more than skin-deep. A capricious mob, fawning on the hand that fed them with bread and circus-shows, is all that heathenism ever made of the lower classes; and even this had continually to be repurchased with fresh sacrifices. Beast-fights led to gladiator-fights, and, gladiator-fights becoming tame, the prisons were emptied into the arena; and, at length, the jails themselves yielding an inadequate supply to the frenzied cry for blood,[2] hungry eyes began to be cast upon the little flock of Christians.

*Heathen Rabble.*

*Franc.*, and Gregorii Turon. *Hist.*, etc. It shows the tenacity of the Greek foundation, that as late as the sixth century, Cæsarius of Arles taught his people to sing indifferently in Greek and Latin. L'abbé Guettée opens his history with a lively chapter *sur l'église Gallo-Romaine:* his facts, however, bear more on l'église Gallo-Grecque.

[2] "Fluctuat æquoreo fremitu rabieque faventum,
Carceribus nondum resolutis, mobile vulgus."

"But we leaping, raging like madmen, striking each other, . . . . and sometimes going naked from the show." For much more to the same effect, see Onuphr. Panvin. *De Lud. Circ.* Bad as the circus was, it was considered innocent, in comparison with the filthy enormities of the theatre. Still, the former, says Lactantius, was more maddening; for the spectators became so

Attention once turned that way, persecution followed as a matter of course. In the language of the Lyonnese Confessors, the devil himself went to and fro through the streets of the city, in the shape of a savage beast, and stirred popular excitement into an ungovernable frenzy. Christians began to be hooted and pelted, wherever they appeared. The next step was to seize them and drag them into the forum; where, accused by a blood-thirsty mob, and interrogated by complaisant magistrates, they confessed the Name of Christ and were cast into prison. From the jails they are carried once more, for insult rather than for trial, into the presence of the Prefect of the city.

*Christians Mobbed.*

*Thrown into Prison.*

At this point of the proceedings occurs one of those acts of heroic self-devotion, which, happening as it did in a luxurious and degenerate age, could hardly fail to impress the minds, of the more thoughtful at least, of the persecutors themselves. Vettius Epagathus, a youth of honorable character and station, had not been numbered as yet among the objects of attack. But when he saw the injustice with which his brethren were treated, he could not contain himself. He advanced to the tribunal. He demanded to be heard on the side of the accused. "Art thou, then, a Christian?" asked the Governor in reply. Vettius confessed, and was condemned to death. "Thus he showed himself a *paraclete*," says the Lyonnese narrative, "being filled with the true Paraclete, which enabled him to show his love for the brethren, following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

*Heroic Conduct.*

*A True Paraclete.*

Of the others who had been seized, about ten fell away, to the great discomfort of their brethren. Certain slaves also were forced, by threats of imprisonment or by actual torture, to give information against their masters. Incest, conspiracy, and Thyestean repasts, were among the crimes alleged on the testimony of these wretches. But no accusation was too gross for the fanatical credulity of

*Ten fall away.*

*Crimes alleged.*

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excited that "they often proceeded from words to blows, and a general battle ensued." Lactant. *Divin. Institut.* 63.

the public. What is more surprising, even well-instructed persons, relatives and friends of the accused, allowed their minds to be contaminated by the foul breath of calumny; and palpable lies, by dint of repetition, acquired all the force and certainty of unquestionable facts. The victims, therefore, suffered without pity and without redress. Huddled together in dark and loathsome jails, stretched on the rack, cut, mangled, roasted, burnt, and subjected in short to every variety of torture, they had no resource, no argument, but the unvarying confession, "I am a Christian: no wickedness is practised or tolerated among us."

*Tortures.*

*Charity of the Sufferers.*

It is pleasing to observe that among the Lyonnese Confessors the supreme merit of charity held its proper place. They prayed fervently for those who had fallen in the hour of trial, and their prayers were answered. The greater part of the lapsed returned, and recovered their good standing. What was vastly more difficult, the Martyrs were taught by a common calamity to forget certain differences of opinion, which at other times, perhaps, had received too much of their attention. One instance of this deserves to be particularly noticed.

*Ascetic Party.*

*Alcibiades.*

From the time of S. Paul there had existed in the Church an ascetic or encratite party, which sometimes as a matter of voluntary self-discipline, and in some cases from a less justifiable motive, abstained altogether from animal food and from wine. Alcibiades, one of the confessors, belonged to this class. As soon, however, as one of his companions was moved in a dream to warn him that it was "neither right nor proper to reject the good creatures of God," he changed his course and thankfully partook of what was set before him. There is nothing that pride more reluctantly gives up than a supererogatory virtue. The merit of Alcibiades, therefore, in yielding so cheerfully to the scruples of others, was justly regarded by the Lyonnese as an extraordinary proof of the presence of God's Spirit among them.

Deacon Sanctus, probably of Latin or Gallic origin, was a

*Sanctus.*

*Maturus.*

*Attalus.*

*Alexander.*

*Pothinus.*

martyr such as S. Ignatius would have delighted to contemplate. He stood like an anvil under the strokes of his tormentors, and like an anvil responded by a single ringing note. *Christianus sum* was all he had to say of his name, city, race, condition, and profession. *Christianus sum* he kept on repeating, till his body, we are told, was a mass of sores and cinders, mangled, shrivelled, and distorted, with hardly a vestige left of the human shape. Maturus a new convert, Attalus a pillar of the Church in Pergamos, and Alexander a Phrygian, were equally heroic. The "blessed Pothinus," bowed beneath the weight of more than ninety years, many of which had been spent in the Episcopate at Lyons, showed a dignified serenity worthy of a friend of S. Polycarp and S. John. When asked by the Governor, "Who is the God of the Christians?" he said, "Show thyself worthy, and thou shalt know." After shameful ill-treatment by the mob, he was thrown into prison, where he peacefully expired.

*Blandina.*

*The Lowly exalted.*

But the glory of this great battle for the Faith seems by unanimous consent to have fallen to the lot of Blandina a poor female slave, whose mistress like herself was among the confessors. The fiendish atrocities inflicted upon this woman are minutely described in the letter written by the survivors. Suffice it to say here that as her apparent weakness led the heathen to suppose her an easy prey, so her unexpected firmness and almost miraculous vitality provoked their malice to a point of insatiable fury. Every device of cruelty was exhausted upon her and upon her brother, a lad of fifteen years of age. To sustain the courage of this latter seems to have been her principal concern. Amid the horrors of such scenes, it is delightful to observe the reverence and affection with which her heroic struggle was witnessed by her companions. From a feeble slave she was exalted in their eyes into a princess mighty with God, a true mother in Israel. Her presence pervades the good fight of Faith from the beginning to the end.

*Good Sense of the Confessors.*

The confessors who survived bore their honors, we are told, with meekness and moderation.[3] "They humbled themselves under the mighty Hand by which they had been so honorably exalted. They defended all their brethren who had lapsed, they criminated none: they loosed all, they bound none." The spirit of S. John, it is plain, was still mighty in the Churches.

*Their Epistle.*

*The new Prophets condemned.*

It needs only to be added that the narrative from which this chapter is taken was written[4] by one of the survivors, and sent to the mother Churches in Asia Minor. The witness unto blood before the heathen was accompanied also with a protest against the new Prophets, probably the Montanists, by whom the peace of the Church had been for some time disturbed. Another letter, with the same condemnation of the rising heresy, addressed to Eleutherus, then Bishop of Rome,[5] was sent by the hand of the Presbyter Irenæus, with a testimonial to his character which his subsequent career in the Church proves to have been well deserved.

*Troubles elsewhere.*

*The Pruning of the Vine.*

In other parts of Gaul, and in Rome and other cities of Italy, the persecution raged for some time, and added many names to the roll of the Martyrs. It was accompanied more or less by war, pestilence, and famine; in the midst of all which we get but occasional and unsatisfactory glimpses of the state of Gallic Christianity. About the end of the century another persecution came, and proved still more fatal to the Church in Lyons. But here, as elsewhere, the early proverb was verified, that the more the grass is cut, the more it grows : the more the vine is pruned, the more choice and abundant is the vintage. The blood of the Gallic Martyrs proved to be the seed of an unfailing and increasing harvest.

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[3] The emphasis laid upon this and similar traits in the letter of the confessors shows that a different spirit had already begun to show itself.

[4] Euseb. v. 1–4.

[5] The phrase here employed—*τῆς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν εἰρήνης ἕνεκα πρεσβεύοντες*—"negotiating for the peace of the Churches"—and the fact that the martyrs in prison had written several letters on the subject, seem to countenance the supposition that Eleutherus was the Bishop mentioned by Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.*) who favored the new prophets. See Valesius ad Euseb. v. 3. There are not facts enough to determine the question; but the statement of Tertullian seems to accord better with the impetuous character of Victor, the successor of Eleutherus.

## CHAPTER V.

### JUSTIN MARTYR.

*Justin in search of Truth.*

JUSTIN, surnamed the Martyr, a title won by his apologetic pen, as well as sealed by his blood in witness of the Truth, was a native of Neapolis, a city of Samaria, and probably of heathen parentage. He was born about the beginning of the second century. Tormented from early youth by an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he put himself first under the tuition of a famous Stoic ;[1] but finding, upon trial, that the man could teach him nothing with reference to God, and that he rather despised the earnest inquiries of his pupils, he repaired to the school of an able and subtle Professor of Peripatetic wisdom. Him he found, however, to be a worshipper of gold as the *summum bonum*, and indifferent to all truth that had not a marketable value. Justin, therefore, left him in disgust. At length, hearing of a learned Pythagorean, who had the reputation of being quite inaccessible to the charms of money, he determined to throw himself at his feet, and to become, if permitted, one of his disciples. The philosopher seems to have been nothing more than a pompous charlatan. He possessed, however, no little capacity for words, and in the science of his school imagined he had a key to all knowledge,

*His Teachers*

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[1] *Dialog. cum Tryphone Judæo.* The slightly romantic tinge of this narrative does not impair its credibility; it merely gives us a better insight into the amiable but earnest character of the martyr. Eusebius makes Ephesus the scene of this Dialogue, iv. 18.

human and divine. "Tell me," says he to the eager aspirant, "are you an adept in music, astronomy, and geometry? For by these sciences alone can you learn to abstract the soul from sensible objects, and fix it in contemplation of what is beautiful in itself." Justin, however, knew little of the stars. Perhaps he cared little for them. God, he felt, was nearer to his soul; and he could put no confidence in a system which professed to seek Him by climbing up into the heights of the physical heavens, or by descending into the deep of laborious intellectual abstractions. Grieved, and sick at heart, therefore, he turned from the Pythagorean, and began to look elsewhere for help in his spiritual need.

*Physical Science.*

His next experience was in connection with some of the followers of Plato. Here he was better satisfied. In the world of richly imaginative and mystic speculation into which his new teachers introduced him, his soul began to warm and to expand; his mind was at least agreeably occupied; and though his heart was not as yet filled with the knowledge which alone could give it rest, he began to feel, as it were, the budding of the wings which were to lift it above self. Hope, in other words, revived within him. Intoxicated with a vague but delicious sense of spiritual beauty, he seemed to himself to be just upon the verge of the crowning joy. The unrealities of sense were fading from his view, and the vision of true being, nay, of God himself, might open upon him in a moment. So full was he of this expectation, so earnest and real in the midst of a cloud of philosophic dreams, that he determined to withdraw himself entirely from the tumult of the world, and selecting the loneliest spot he could find on the seashore, there to await in silence and meditation the fulfilment of his hopes.

*Becomes a Platonist.*

*Philosophic Dreams.*

Nor was he disappointed altogether in his confident expectation. He who heareth the young ravens that call upon Him, would not turn a deaf ear to so earnest a seeker as the eager and unselfish Platonician. As Justin walked and mused, within hearing of the multitudinous voices of the sea, he was met by a grave old man of a certain sweetness

*He meets with an Evangelist.*

of expression. The philosopher was charmed. He stopped, and, unconsciously to himself, fixed his eyes eagerly upon the stranger. "Do you know me," said the latter, "that you gaze so earnestly upon me?" "No," answered Justin, "I am only surprised to meet one like you in this solitary place." "I am here," said the stranger, "because my soul is disquieted on account of certain of my friends. They are tossed on the sea, and I am anxious to find them, or hear tidings of them."

*A Christian Philosopher.*

The acquaintance thus mysteriously begun ripened soon into confidence and friendship. Justin discoursed of what was uppermost in his mind, the beauty and the sweetness of true philosophy. To know what really is, to seek and love the Truth, this, he declared, is the only thing worth living for, the only thing to fill and satisfy the heart. To his surprise he found the stranger more at home on such subjects than himself. Without any scientific pretension he spoke of the nature of God, of the soul, of the true philosophy of life, with a tranquillity and assurance that captivated the ingenuous seeker, and led him finally to the conclusion that if he was to make any progress in heavenly wisdom, he must begin at the lowest round of the ladder, and become a disciple in the school of Jesus Christ.

*The School of Christ.*

*Study of the Scriptures.*

To this, however, he had to be led gradually, the prejudices against Christianity being as gross among the well-instructed heathen as among the rabble, and far more inveterate. His teacher, therefore, was content to introduce him to the Old Testament Scriptures. Struck with the sublimity and beauty of these sacred writings, he studied them with single-hearted earnestness; thus laying the foundation of that hermeneutic skill which he ever afterwards regarded as his *charisma*, or spiritual gift. From the Old he was led easily into the New. The real character of Christianity, and the truth with regard to the life and conversation of its professors, began to dawn upon him. "I had heard much against them," says he, "and shared in the common delusion.

*Prejudices removed.*

But when I considered their courage in encountering death and every other terror, I felt at once that they could not be guilty of the crimes of which they were accused. To a mere voluptuary, to a shameless debauchee, to one who takes delight in eating human flesh, death cannot prove otherwise than terrible; for it puts on end to the gross pleasures in which they spend their life. The Christians, however, welcome death with joy."[2] Considerations of this kind opened the way to inquiry, and inquiry led to satisfaction and conviction.

*Justin's Calling.*

That he ever entered the ministry is extremely doubtful.[3] Indeed, in the absence of any positive proof that he did, it seems more probable that he found his "gift" could be exercised to greater advantage under the garb of a philosopher, and in the freedom of lay life, than amid the confining and pressing duties of the ordinary priesthood. Certain it is that he visited many countries, and had argumentative discussions both with Jews and Greeks. His controversy in Ephesus with Trypho, a learned Jew who had survived the horrors of the insurrection of Bar Cochba, and his two Apologies, addressed, the one to the Emperor Aurelius, and the other to the Roman Senate and People, with some other works or fragments of works, remain to show the way in which these discussions were conducted. Without going into an analysis of any of these writings,[4] it is worth while to notice, that Justin interpreted both Hebrew and Greek learning on the same general principles; finding in both innumerable types or foreshadowings of the truth of the Gospel; and making all earnest thought of all ages, and all races, to centre, as it were, in the incarnate Word, to point towards Him, and in Him to receive its complete and harmonious interpretation.

*Public Discussions*

*Christ in all.*

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[2] Apol. i.

[3] Tillemont thinks he was a Presbyter—*Mem. pour servir.* vol. ii. part 2—but on insufficient grounds.

[4] *Account of the Writings and Opinions of Justin Martyr:* John (Kaye), Bishop of Lincoln. *Justin. d. Martyrer,* Semisch, translated by Ryland, and published in *Clark's Biblical Cabinet.* Volckmar, *die Zeit. ds. Just. M.*

Thus, not the Law and the Prophets only, but the Poets and Philosophers, were fulfilled in Christ.

*The Seed-light.*

In fact, the Logos, the First-born of God, who is also God, being from all eternity *immanent in God*, but *coming forth from God* for creation, was regarded by Justin as the *seed light* to the ages that preceded the revelation of the Gospel; so that upright heathen, Socrates for example, were undeveloped believers, being obedient to the light that was in them.[5] On this ground he apologizes for the lateness of the Incarnation. As the first days of the creation had light enough for growth, though destitute as yet of sun and moon and stars, so with the ages, and the races, among which Christ was unrevealed. Justin, therefore, would not deny the good that existed in heathendom; he preferred showing how it pointed to a far greater good. It was somewhat inconsistent with all this, that he ascribed the numerous ceremonies which pagan worship had in common with Christianity, to the malicious *apery* of dæmons; these latter mimicking the truth in order to make it odious.[6] In tracing the unconscious prophecies of heathen poetry and philosophy, or even of heathen oracles, Justin, it must be confessed, is not very critical; quoting oftentimes from works unquestionably spurious, and some of them fabrications of the age in which he lived.

*Justin's Faith.*

In his treatment of matters of faith, and especially in dealing with the great mysteries of the Creed, his orthodoxy in general is beyond all question. As an interpreter, however, to Jews and Greeks, and as one of the earliest who attempted, so to speak, to translate the language of simple faith into the dialect of philosophers and disputers, he is betrayed occasionally into modes of expression, which at a later period would hardly have been considered admissible, or safe. In all cases the phraseology of early writers has to be received with a certain allowance.[7] It could hardly be expected that the first attempts to give a philosophic or scientific form to truths commonly received in the Church should be entirely conclusive. The wonder is, not that we find some objectionable phrases in the early fathers, or some untenable positions, but that we find so few.

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[5] The *Logos endiathetos—Logos prophoricos—Logos spermaticos.* See Neander's Lectures on the History of Christian Dogmas.

[6] e. g., *Bread and wine* used in the mysteries of Mithras; and *baptisms*, or ablutions, in almost all forms of heathen worship.

*His Opinions.*

With regard to matters of opinion, or interpretation, Justin fell into some mistakes from too careless a following of the letter of Holy Scripture. He was an advocate of the Millenarian doctrine. From a notion that the sons of God mentioned in the beginning of the sixth chapter of Genesis were Angels, he favored the absurd hypothesis that children were begotten by them of the daughters of men, and that the offspring thus begotten became Dæmons of the Gentiles. It is more to his credit, that he departed from a common prejudice of his day, in allowing a possibility of salvation to Jewish Christians[8] who conscientiously continued in the observance of the Law.

*Religious Rites.*

As a witness to the religious customs of Christians in his day, Justin speaks with less reserve than was common with early writers, and gives us the most exact information we have: the outline he presents supplying some features of ritual in which Pliny's famous letter is deficient[9]

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[7] For example, *creation* and *generation* were for some time more or less confounded. In the tenth chapter of Bishop Kaye's *Writings of Justin Martyr* the reader will find a summary of Justin's views, as illustrated by passages from Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus.

[8] His lenient way of speaking of the Ebionite denial of the Divinity of Christ, in the Dialogue with Trypho, viz., "*I do not agree with these*, because I have been taught not to follow men, but the declarations of Christ and the Prophets"—has been regarded by some as indicative of a certain laxness in his views. I should rather infer the reverse. The firmer a man's faith, the better he can afford to use mild language.

[9] Kaye's *Justin M.* chap. iv. Among the particulars mentioned, we may notice, (1) the doctrine of Baptism and the Eucharist, in which the grace given is much insisted on; (2) the careful preparation (fasting and prayer); (3) the kiss of peace; (4) wine mixed with water in the Eucharist; (5) the bearing of a portion to the absent; (6) separation of the Eucharist from the Love Feast; (7) special observance of Sunday; (8) alms for orphans, widows, etc. *Apolog.* i.

Judging from his account, neither Baptism nor the Eucharist had received any ceremonial additions to the severe simplicity of Apostolic times. In describing the administration of the Lord's Supper, he seems to have followed the order of the Service now known as that of S. James.[10]

*His Confession.*

The latter portion of his life was spent by the Apologist in Rome, remaining all day at his house near the baths of Timotheus, and conversing freely with those who came to him for instruction or discussion. During this period he incurred the fixed hatred of the Stoic Crescens, whom he handled somewhat roughly in argument, and to whose influence in high quarters he was probably indebted for the Martyr's crown. According to the Acts of his Martyrdom,[11] a piece authenticated by its primitive modesty and simplicity, he was brought, with several other Christians, before the tribunal of Junius Rusticus, Prefect of the City, not long before the death of S. Polycarp.[12] "Obey the will of the Gods and the commands of the Emperor" was, as usual, the opening of the trial. In Justin's reply, there is little of the sententious brevity or dignified reserve of a Polycarp or Pothinus; nor does he take refuge in the simple *Christianus sum*, that ringing anvil-note of Lyonnese Sanctus: his attitude has more of the dialectician;—a man of faith, indeed, but ready and even eager to give a reason for the faith that is in him. "There is nothing to reprehend in a man, who obeys the commands of our Saviour, Jesus Christ." "But what is your profession?" says Rusticus, to what school do you belong?" "I once strove," he replied, "to become acquainted with every school of philosophy, and to make myself master of every science; but having sought the Truth on all sides without success, I finally embraced the philosophy of the Christians, not considering whether it pleased or displeased the votaries of error." "Wretched man!" cried the Prefect, "you follow that doctrine, then?" "Yes. I follow that doctrine, and with joy, for it shows me the Truth." "But what is Truth?" "The Truth," answered Justin, "is to believe in one God, who created all things, visible and invisible, and to confess our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, announced long ago by the Prophets, Who is to come again to judge all men, and Who is the Saviour, as well as the Teacher of His true Disciples. Far be it from me to pretend to speak worthily of His infinite greatness or of his Divinity. Such a theme belongs rather to the Prophets, who so long before predicted His coming upon earth." The Prefect then asked him, in what place the Christians assembled for their worship. "We assemble where we can," said Justin: "God is not confined to any place. Invisible, He fills the Heavens and the Earth, and the faithful adore Him everywhere: in every place they offer Him the honor and worship due unto His Name."

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[10] Palmer's *Origines Liturg.;* Asseman. *Cod. Liturg.* tom. v.

[11] Given in Baronius; also in Tillemont.

[12] The dates are uncertain: Polycarp's death is variously stated at 147, 169, 175; Justin's is put as early as 165. I have put Justin *after* Polycarp and Pothimus, merely as belonging to a later period of intellectual culture.

*His Creed.*

After some further questions, Rusticus addressed himself to the companions of Justin. Carito and Caritina answered, that by the goodness of God they were Christians. Euelpistus said, "I am a slave of Cæsar, but a Christian. Jesus Christ, by His grace, hath made me free." Hierax and Liberianus acknowledged themselves servants and adorers of the only true God. Seeing little chance of making an impression upon these simple folk, and feeling, it may be, more interest in the fate of their accomplished leader, the Prefect turned to Justin once more, and addressed him in a bantering tone: "You are a man with a tongue in your head, and a professor, it would seem, of the genuine philosophy. Tell me, then, I pray, do you really believe that if I have you scourged from head to foot, you will straightway go up to Heaven?" "Yes," said Justin, "if you have me scourged, I hope to receive the reward promised to all those who keep the commandments of Christ: for I know that all who live by this rule shall be the friends of God."

*His Companions.*

*His Hope.*

"You think, then," said the Prefect, "that you are going up to Heaven to be rewarded there?" "Not only do I think it," answered Justin, "but I know it: and that, too, assuredly and beyond all doubt."

*Martyrdom.*

The examination was followed by the usual command to sacrifice to idols; which the prisoners unanimously refusing to do, they were scourged,[13] and soon afterwards beheaded.

*Scoffing Spirit of the Heathen.*

In this trial, as indeed in all controversies of that day, with Jews or Gentiles, Christianity had to cope with that hard, and keen, and exquisitely polished irony, which is one of the fruits of a merely intellectual civilization, and which to simple faith is the most horrible of all weapons. Men of the school of S. Polycarp avoided it, no doubt, by a holy and dignified reserve. The time was come, however, for a closer and more deadly struggle with the powers of darkness. It is much to Justin Martyr's credit, that in his dialogues, apologies, and discussions generally, he was sufficiently free-spoken, but not unnecessarily harsh or rude. On the contrary, he answers sneers generally with admirable temper; and a love of souls is almost as conspicuous in his writings as a zeal for the Truth. His own very gradual conversion led him to look hopefully upon the various stages of approximate belief and partial knowledge.

*Tatian his Disciple.*

Among his disciples was Tatian, an Assyrian, who wrote with some earnestness in defence of "the philosophy of the barbarians," as he styled the Gospel, but was afterwards led by his austerity of temper into Gnostic errors. The "Epistle to Diognetus," a choice rhetorical production of some Christian Apologist who wrote early in the century, has been ascribed to Justin Martyr, but on no sufficient grounds.

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[13] As Justin, it is supposed, had the right of citizenship, the scourging here mentioned throws a shade of doubt upon the genuineness of these acts. But (1) his citizenship is not certain; and (2) even if it were, the Roman Magistrates were not always scrupulous about such rights in the case of Christians.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE APOLOGETIC AGE.

*End of the Century.*

THE last third of the second century, the period that followed the persecution under Marcus Aurelius, is uneventful so far as external history is concerned, but full of growing interest with regard to matters of discipline and doctrine.

*Melito.*

During the reign of Aurelius, Melito, Bishop of Sardis, wrote to the Emperor his Apology for a Faith, which had come in, he urged, with the Empire itself, but was left without redress to the capricious violence of the mob. He was a highly gifted man, and among his contemporaries enjoyed the reputation of a Prophet. He drew up a canon of the Old Testament, containing only the received Books of the Hebrew Scriptures. The variety of subjects on which he wrote[1] is enough to show that the holy diffidence which had produced so long a spell of silence in the Church at the beginning of the century, was fast giving way before the pressure of the times.

*Other Apologists.*

Claudius Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, wrote an Apology; and was not a little troubled by the rising heresy of Montanus. Of other names indicative of the awakened intellect of the day, it is enough to mention, in this place, Miltiades, an Apologist; Hermias, who ridiculed the paradoxes of the philosophers; Athenagoras an Athenian philosopher; Theophilus, the sixth Bishop of Antioch, who introduced the term *trias;* Tatian a disciple of Justin Martyr, and Bardesanes an elegant writer of Edessa, both of whom fell into Gnostic errors; Musanus, who strove against the plausible error which went under the name of *encraty* or continence; Minucius Felix and Tertullian in North Africa; Irenæus and his disciples; the writers of the Alexandrine School, of whom, as of some others above mentioned, there will be occasion to speak more particularly in another place.[2] The title "Apologetic Age," applied to this period, has to be understood in a large sense; for the controversy with heretics was conducted with even greater vigor than the defence of the Gospel against the heathen.

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[1] Euseb. iv. 26.

*Heathen Opponents*

On the other hand, Heathenism was no longer content to assail the Faith with the weapons of fanatical fury merely, or of a variable state policy. Philosophy was awakened to a sense of its own danger.[3] Crescens and Fronto endeavored by vile calumnies to fortify Aurelius with a valid plea for persecution. Lucian impartially derided all the religions of his times, and found a butt for his satiric humor in the zeal of Martyrs and Confessors. Celsus confounded Christianity with the dreams of Gnostic sects, and, avoiding the ground of vulgar paganism, assailed it, now with the light missiles of Epicurean indifferentism, now with the heavier metal of the Platonic philosophy. As the controversy proceeded, the adversaries of the Gospel resorted more and more to this method of attack. On the one hand, the Christian name could be made to cover an ever increasing number of absurd and wicked sects; on the other, philosophy, through the influence of the diffused light of truth, was becoming more intellectual and more spiritual than it had hitherto appeared. The new Platonic School began to flourish in Alexandria towards the end of the century. Ammonius Saccas, one of its first teachers, was acquainted with Christianity. So also was Plotinus, and at a later period Porphyry, the latter of whom was hostile

*New Platonic School.*

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[2] See Euseb. iv. 21–30; v. 13, 18, 19.

[3] The argument for and against the Gospel, as managed in early times, is accessible to English readers in Reeves's *Apologies* (Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Minucius Felix); also in Bellamy's *Origen against Celsus,* and Humphrey's *Apologetics of Athenagoras.* See also Oxford Translations of the Fathers.

to the Gospel in proportion as he drew from it his noblest and best thoughts.

*Apollonius of Tyana.*

But philosophers of this kind belonged to an intellectual oligarchy, and had little influence with the people. They were also wonderfully superstitious.[4] The wonder-working life of Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of the Apostles, was rescued from oblivion by rhetoricians of this school, adorned with a profusion of unmeaning miracles, and set up as an embodiment of the philosophic perfect man. A strict vegetable diet, a pure Attic style, a sententious utterance of commonplaces, an attempt to relieve heathen worship of some of its grosser abominations, a profound contempt for the unenlightened many, and an appreciation of the maxim that knowledge is power, are prominent features of the ideal thus constructed in opposition to Christianity. According to them, the true sages dwell, surrounded with a cloud and armed with superhuman resources, on a height inaccessible to the common herd. The soul lives after death separate from the body, but of its ultimate destiny it is unwise to inquire. Such was the lesson of the Life of Apollonius.[5] The poverty of this performance, as compared with the matchless Life recorded

*The Ideal Man.*

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[4] Porphyrius, *De Vita Plotini*, found in Fabricii, *Bibliothec. Græc.* lib. iv. cap. 26. Plotinus professed to have a god for his familiar; which was proved when a certain Egyptian priest of Isis attempted to call up the dæmon of Plotinus; for instead of a dæmon a god suddenly appeared. *Vita Plotin.* cap. 10. On the strength of this, when one of his disciples invited him to go with him and worship the gods, Plotinus answered, "They should come to me, not I to them." With all these pretensions, his high favor with Gallienus and the Empress could not obtain for him the gift of a ruined city in Campania, to establish a Platonic commonwealth: cap. 12. The Christians gloried, therefore, that while Platonic wisdom had never succeeded in founding a single town, the words of a few fishermen were becoming a law to the whole world. On the new Platon. Sch. see Degerando, *H. de la Phil.*

[5] *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, translated by the Rev. Edward Berwick. The miracles of Apollonius (as Newman shows in his *Apollon. Tyan.*) are mere juggling wonders, without dignity and without meaning. After his death, his *ghost* appeared to a young disciple, but gave him no information.

in the four Gospels, shows that Christianity had little to fear from the rivalry of philosophers.

*Legio Fulminea.*

In the meanwhile, the Church had a season of comparative immunity from political persecution. The Emperor Aurelius, moved by a Providential deliverance of his army from the Quadi and Marcomanni,[6] which the Christians ascribed to the prayers of certian soldiers of their own in the "Thundering Legion," became, at length, weary of a fruitless persecution, and issued a severe edict against informers. That the event referred to awakened a religious feeling in the mind of the Emperor there can be no doubt. It seems equally certain that his own thanks were rendered to Jupiter Pluvius. It may easily have been, however, that, his mind being restored for the time being to something of its early childlike faith,[7] he looked more indulgently upon religious fervor in general, and was therefore disposed to be more tolerant of the peculiar zeal of the Christians. For it was the *lively faith* of the Church, rather than its doctrinal system, that seems hitherto to have moved his hatred.

*Commodus,* A. D. 180–192.

*Apollonius a Martyr.*

Commodus, whose atrocities sprang from personal caprice rather than from any political or religious principle, was in the main not unfavorable to Christians; and Marcia, his mistress, whom he honored almost as an Empress, used her influence in their behalf. Notwithstanding all this, there were martyrs not a few in this reign. Apollonius, a literary man and philosopher of Rome, a Senator by rank, was condemned on the testimony of a slave, and beheaded, after a noble apology before that stronghold of heathenism, the distinguished body to which he belonged. At the same time, the law bearing on the subject being administered with singular impartiality, the wretch who accused him was also put to death.

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[6] The story is given in Eusebius, v. 5. The name *Legio Fulminea* was older, however, than the alleged event; and Tertullian's account is qualified by the word "perhaps"—"Christianorum *forte* militum." See Gieseler, § 42, n. 5, and Neander's *Ch. Hist.* i. 1.

[7] In the mind of Aurelius, early religious feeling had to struggle against a hard crust of stoic fatalism. It was in this latter spirit that he declared: "Whosoever shall do anything *to disturb the minds of men with fear of the Divine power* . . . let him be banished," etc.; or, "Whosoever shall bring in novel religions . . . by which the *souls of men may be troubled*, let him," . . . etc. He hated anything fervid or moving in religion. For an account of his religious character (perhaps too favorable), see Neander's *Ch. History.*

*Septimius Severus*, A. D. 192–211.

Septimius Severus, it is said,[8] had been healed of a sore disease by a Christian of the name of Proculus, afterwards a member of his household; and had appointed a Christian nurse for his son Antoninus. If not actually favorable to the Church, he was at least indisposed to molest it. But about the middle of his reign he found it necessary, as he thought, to prohibit the further spread of the Gospel. Proselyting was forbidden both to the Jews and Christians. Finding, however, that in spite of his decrees the tide continued to rise, the Emperor was at length induced to countenance more active measures. The storm that ensued fell with most severity upon Palestine and Egypt; but was felt also in North Africa, Rome, and many other portions of the Church. From certain expressions of Tertullian[9] it may be doubted whether Severus himself was actively concerned in this persecution. It was enough that he allowed it. The cruelty of the mob, the complaisance or cupidity of magistrates, and the hostility of Jews, heathen, and philosophers, would easily do the rest. For to other causes of persecution it began now to be added that there were Christians wealthy and weak enough to purchase for themselves an exemption from martyrdom. Without sacrificing to idols or burning incense, they might procure

*Sixth Persecution.*

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[8] Tertull. *Ad Scap.* iii. 4.

[9] Blunt's *Lectures on the Church of the first three centuries;* Mosheim's *Commentaries.* Tertullian (*Apologet.* i. 5, and *ad Scap.* iii. 4) is anxious to make out that no good Emperor persecuted the Christians, and no really good magistrate; but that the rabble and wicked men were responsible. He therefore strains a point in favor of Marcus Aurelius, Severus, and others. His language, however, merely proves that these Emperors were *sometimes* favorable to the Christians.

a certificate to the effect that they had done so, and might thus remain unmolested. These were called *Libellatici;* a class that figures largely in the history of Church discipline during the third century.

*Libellatici.*

Whole communities, it is said, procured exemption in this way. It was a kind of evasion as impolitic as it was unjustifiable on moral grounds.[10] For it not only created a new motive for persecution, but it surrounded Christians at all times with a crowd of greedy spies and informers, who made a livelihood out of their fears and kept them in a state of perpetual torture.

Some of the particulars of this persecution will come up incidentally in connection with events hereafter to be mentioned. It was followed by a calm of thirty-eight years, interrupted only by a brief and cruel outbreak under Maximin the Thracian, which is reckoned as the seventh of the general persecutions. During this interval of peace, the sun-worshipper Elagabalus wished to blend Christianity, as well as the religion of Jews and Samaritans, with the superstitious worship paid to his god.[11] Alexander Severus, influenced by his half-Christian mother Julia Mammæa, was disposed to admit Christ to equal honors in the sacrifices offered to Abraham, Orpheus, and Apollonius of Tyana.[12] Philip the Arabian was still more favorable to Christianity; and it was very generally thought that intellectually, at least, he was a believer.[13]

*Peace of Thirty-eight Years,*
A.D. 211–249.

A.D. 235–238.

But, as already intimated in the beginning of this chapter, the favor or disfavor of princes, and the presence or absence of external persecutions, were no longer the most prominent of the trials of the Church. There were difficulties from within, far more formidable. What these were, how they were encountered, and by what means and to what extent they were finally vanquished, shall be the special theme of the remaining chapters of this Book.

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[10] A worse evasion (*Can. of Ancyra,* i.) was, by a previous understanding with the magistrates, to undergo a mere *sham* torture, or threats of torture, without being placed in any real danger. Shifts of this sort made the Christians more careful in insisting upon actual scars, or mutilations, on the part of those who claimed to be confessors.

[11] Lampridius in *Heliogab.* 3.

[12] Lamprid. in *S. Alex.* 22, 28, 29, 43, 45, 49.

[13] Euseb. vi. 34, 36. His conversion is elaborately discussed, and disproved, in Pagi, *Breviarium Pontific.* etc. *S. Fabianus.*

*Trials from within.*

## CHAPTER VII.

### HERESIES AND SCHOOLS.

THE twofold struggle between the Gospel and the Law, and between Faith and a false Gnosis, had been in its main elements, and so far as it was a contest for supremacy within the Church, substantially decided long before the departure of the last of the Apostles. In doctrine, discipline, and worship, the Church was free to take her own course; having a creed, a polity, and divinely taught sacraments of her own, with liberty in building thereupon to avail herself of what elements of natural religion she might find to accord with this foundation, whether sanctioned or not by Judaic prejudices. In the same way with regard to the Gnostics, it was perfectly understood that theirs was a "Gnosis falsely so called." In developing, therefore, a Gnosis, or religious science of her own, the Church regarded Gnostic principles with horror and aversion. By the end of the first century she was Anti-Jewish and Anti-Gnostic in heart and mind and confession.

*The Church Free.*

*Neither Jewish nor Gnostic.*

Hence, Judaizing Christians soon drew off into obscure, and, so far as the body of the Church was concerned, uninfluential sects. In the great cities, however, and among the mixed multitudes, half Christian half Heathen, the leaven of the circumcision was still powerful enough to foment

I. JUDAIST SECTS.

factions and divisions. The Nazarenes and Ebionites, mentioned in the first Book of this history, flourished chiefly in Palestine.

*The Clementines.*

The Clementine Homilies,[1] so called, remain to the present day as proof of a very ingenious effort made, towards the end of the second century, to fall back upon a pretended *primitive religion;* a "house of wisdom," as it were, of which Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, should be the "seven pillars," Christ also being acknowledged as greatest of them all. This system was remarkable for a full-blown doctrine of papal supremacy;[2] James of Jerusalem, however, being placed at its head. To the Judaic elements of the system there was added a Gnostic theory of emanations in pairs. These Clementines express the sentiments of the Elxaite school, but were probably revamped by some philosophic Roman, in the interest of one or other of the Judaizing factions which troubled the great city.

*Elxaites, (about)* A.D. 220.

Hippolytus gives us more precise information of the *Elxaites*, a Judaic Gnostic sect, a branch of which came to Rome during the pontificate of Callistus.[3] They made Christ the male, and the Holy Ghost the female, in a series of successive manifestations or incarnations. They were ascetic in their habits, but differed from most ascetics by enjoining early marriage as a duty, and condemning virginity. To that numerous class of Christians, whose consciences were troubled by the sense of post-baptismal sins, or who were undergoing Church discipline, they offered an attractive bait in a new baptism with plenary absolution, to be repeated as often as required. This baptism was made extremely solemn and impressive. The

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[1] Clementis Roman. *quæ feruntur Homiliæ*, etc., Gott. 1853. See Gieseler, § 58; Schaff, § 69.

[2] Clement addresses James as "the lord, and bishop of bishops, ruler of the holy Church of the Hebrews in Jerusalem, and of the Churches of God established everywhere."

[3] S. Hippolyti, *Refut. Omn. Hæresium*, lib. ix. 13. The state of the Roman Church, and the position of Hippolytus towards the Bishops of the city, are more fully treated in ii. 9, and iii. 4, of this History.

*Baptisms.*

*Laxity of Discipline.*

candidate "was immersed in the Name of the Most High, and of His Son the Great King, and with invocation of the *seven Witnesses*, sky and water, and holy spirits, and prayer-angels, and oil, and salt, and earth." In the name of these they were to renounce all past and future sin. The gospel of these Elxaites, "Be converted and baptized *cum toto vestitu*,"[4] was an offer of free, immediate, and unconditional pardon to all sinners of every sort; and, at a time when the Church required a long catechumenal probation before baptism, and a tedious and severe penance for sins committed after, it must have proved a formidable rival to the orthodox faith. In addition to this, there were pretensions to supernatural powers; a secret doctrine imparted only to the initiated; great reverence for the Sabbath; and an affectation of severity and simplicity of manners. Hippolytus complains that Callistus paved the way for this heresy by his lax administration of the discipline of the Church. It is more probable that the activity of Sects of this kind, and the attractions they held out to the mixed multitude of half-believers, rendered a strict enforcement of the canons practically impossible. In the same way, their elaborate and significant ceremonial may have had an influence upon the development of ritual in the Church.

II.
GNOSTICISM.

Men who started with the assumption common to all the philosophers of antiquity,[5] that *evil inheres in matter*, could not regard matter or the material world as a creature of the supreme and only good God. Either it must be eternal, or it must be the work of an evil power, or it must be the rubbish, so to speak, that remained after the framing of the spiritual *pleroma*, or it must be the result of some negligence or accident with which the one absolute and true Being had nothing at all to do. Hence the main effort of Gnostic speculations. The material world and the evil that clings to it must be removed as far as possible from that unfathomable and silent Deep, the Fountain of all good. Endless genealogies must be framed,[5] of angels, *æons*, or emanations, issuing singly or in pairs through a descending, widening and deteriorating scale; till at length, in the dim twilight beyond the outermost circle of the *pleroma*, on the border of light and darkness, good and evil, being and no being, we find the *Demiurgus* blindly working: "the nether intelligence," the offspring of the lowest æon, the ruler of the darkness, the architect of this material world constructing out of "emptiness" and "nothingness" a huge prison-house; wherein the lowest and fallen æon, the feeblest ray of the world of light, groans and struggles for deliverance, finding an articulate voice in the "spiritual" soul of man. For the recovery of this "lost sheep," Christ the Saviour, an æon of the highest order, comes down into the world. As He glides through the æon-circles He forms to Himself a body of ethereal elements; or on His arrival unites Himself for awhile to the earthly body of Jesus; or, abhorring all communion with matter, assumes a

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[4] For baptism in the Church, candidates had to be divested of their clothing —putting off the old and putting on the new. The opposite custom of the Elxaites was probably meant to signify that they were ready to receive sinners *just as they were*.

[5] Even Plato: see Gieseler, § 44, notes 1–5. The tenets of the Gnostic sects belong to the history of philosophy, rather than of religion. The ancient writers on the subject are brought together in the *Corpus Hæresiologicum*, Franciscus Oehler, Berolini. There is quite a full account of early heresies in the *History of the Church*, etc., by Jeremie and others; and an excellent digest in Dr. Schaff's History, and in Robertson's *Hist. of Ch.*

*God and the World.*

*Æon System.*

*The Lost Sheep.*

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[6] The following are the principal points of the system: (1) The primal Being—*Buthos*, the Abyss—*Sige*, Silence—or even ὁ οὐκ ὤν, nonentity; (2) *pleroma*—the living sphere of *æons*, or spiritual emanations; (3) *kenoma*—the void that lies beyond that sphere; (4) *demiurgus*—the world-creator; (5) *hyle*—matter; (6) *pneumatic*, *psychic*, *hylic*—spiritual, sensuous, material souls. From Christianity they borrowed the idea of a Saviour. *Dualism* is well defined by Plato: "Not by one soul merely is the world moved, but by several perhaps, or at all events by not less than two; of which the one is beneficent, the other the opposite, and a framer of the opposite; besides which, there is also a third somewhere between, not senseless, nor irrational, nor without self-motion, but touching upon both of the twain, yet always longing for the better, and following after it." The Persians called the good *Ormuzd*, the evil *Ahriman*, and the intermediate *Mithras*.

*docetic* or apparitional body. Once on earth, He becomes through the Holy Spirit the light-centre of the world. To Him all "spiritual" souls are drawn by the *gnosis* which He gives them;[7] "material" or *hylic* souls gravitate towards the matter; "psychic" souls, Jews or ordinary Christians, hover betwixt the two. At length, in one way or another, the lost ray of supernal light being extricated from the slough or prison-house of matter, and united to the highest æon in an everlasting wedlock, the *pleroma* is rounded off into a complete and consistent whole; matter, or the *kenoma*, finally disappears; and a transcendental life, flowing with equal pulse from the centre to the circumference, or back again from the circumference to the centre, diffuses an unmixed and superabundant joy.

*Salvation by Gnosis.*

Such, in a general way, was the scheme upon which the Gnostics labored; each particular workman, however, fashioning it according to his own fancy, and adorning it with his own pomp of great swelling words. In all its forms, the Demiurge was identified with the God of the Old Testament. Whether He and His works were to be treated as simply evil, or impotently vacillating between the evil and the good, would be determined by the extent to which Eastern *dualism* was admitted into the system. For on the dualistic scheme matter was not a mere void, it was an active principle of evil; and the world, in the same way, was not a mere prison-house, but the battle-ground, as it were, between the two rival kingdoms of light and darkness.

*The Demiurge.*

*Dualism.*

In the same way, while all Gnostics agreed to despise the body, those who held to the dualistic belief were in general the most earnest; and took part in the fierce struggle between the two kingdoms by rushing into the extreme of Oriental asceticism. The Hellenic Gnostics were more indulgent, or more ingenious; and left the flesh to destroy itself by following its own will. The filthiness into which some of these wretches sank, could have flowed from nothing

*Gnostic Morals.*

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[7] This gnosis they represented as a secret tradition, communicated only to the initiated few.

short of demoniacal possession. It was somewhat inconsistent with their contempt for the world and for the body, that they recognized in things below an image or adumbration of the supersensuous sphere; so that, to attain any knowledge of the world of truth, one has to go up along the path of sense and sight. On this principle, both nature and the Scriptures were allegorized, but in a purely arbitrary manner.

*Gnostic Cultus.*

*Two Baptisms.*

*Gnosis as a Philosophy.*

*Its Merits.*

So far as Gnosticism was consistent, it was too speculative and "spiritual" to be bound by creeds, scriptures, sacraments, or anything external.[8] As it aimed at influence, however, it had to accommodate itself to the "psychical" element in man. Hence it copied more or less of the ritual of the Church. It had a water baptism for the "psychical," a baptism of the Spirit for the "spiritual." The Lord's Supper was rejected by some, because, says S. Ignatius, they believed not in the "flesh" or Incarnation of the Lord; and celebrated with much pomp and with blasphemous additions, by others. In fact, while a few speculative minds might be content with that Gnosis, which they regarded as the sum of all worship, others more eager to gain proselytes would resort to every art to win the attention and the favor of the sensuous multitude. Gnosis, as a philosophy, therefore, is to be distinguished from Gnosis as a religion. In the former aspect, it was a grand but futile effort to fuse fact and fable, poetry and mythology, philosophy and science, magic and religion, into one consistent whole, which should satisfy the spiritual as well as the intellectual wants of man, and solve the deep questions which so far neither religion nor philosophy had been able to answer. This was attempted by a process of intuition, so called, which was in fact nothing more than guessing. Whatever praise, therefore, can be accorded to fanciful and ingenious guessing, the better class of Gnostics more or less deserve. But as an offset to this merit, they originated nothing in morals, religion, philosophy, science, or literature, that has stood the test of time; they constructed nothing that has been able to hold together.[9] If it be admitted that they were the profoundest and most brilliant, it must be conceded also that they were the most barren, of all the heretics of antiquity.

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[8] For the Gnostic cultus, see Neander's Church History.

*Influence negative.*

Arising, as they did, at a time when the intellect of the Church was just awakening to a consciousness of its strength—moving moreover in the literary sphere, and abounding in bold assertions and brilliant generalizations—they bore undoubtedly a most portentous aspect to minds of an imaginative and philosophic turn; and in this way we can account for the attention given to them by so many of the most distinguished early Christian writers. But behind all this there was little of real earnestness or power. The system, on the whole, was merely an expiring effort of philosophic and poetic paganism, exhibiting the brilliant colors of the dolphin as it dies. It was the morning mist, as it were, the fog that had settled upon the world during the long night of heathen darkness, breaking up into gorgeous clouds before the Sun of Christianity, reflecting in varied hues the light before which it fled, and, it may be added, carrying off along with it much of the miasma with which the spiritual atmosphere had been so long infected. For the contest with Gnosticism was of no little service to the Church. Christians did not love the Old Testament less, when they found that Gnostics abhorred it. Nor did the continued assaults upon the Incarnation, or the Creed, or upon the authority of one portion or another of the New Testament, render them less zealous in defence of those sacred trusts. In the same way, Gnostic austerities made the Church look more sharply to the grounds of

*Morning Clouds.*

*Benefit to the Church.*

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[9] Dr. Schaff, while he seems to blame the Fathers for representing it as "an unintelligible congeries of puerile absurdities and impious blasphemies," yet grants it to be a system in which "monstrous nonsense and the most absurd conceits are chaotically mixed up with profound thoughts and poetical intuitions." The Fathers say the same; only they ascribe the "profound thoughts and poetical intuitions" to the old philosophers and poets from whom they were borrowed, and give the Gnostics credit only for the "monstrous nonsense." See Degerando, *H. de la Phil.* xx. xxi.

ascetic tendencies within her own pale. The great principle, in short, that there is one good God who hath made all things good, so that, as S. Ignatius expressed it, even bodily acts are spiritual if done in the Spirit, was more deeply stamped into Christian consciousness from the fact that these versatile and pretentious heretics so unanimously denied it.

*Positive Influence.*

To this it may be added, that their claim to a peculiar *gnosis*, or science, distinguished from simple *faith*, made the development of Christian theology a matter of necessity.[10] The false gnosis could be refuted effectually, only by confronting it with a genuine gnosis. On the other hand, the Gnostics corrupted heathenism. By putting metaphysical abstractions, such as *mind, word, thought, wisdom, power, justice, peace*, in the place of the old nature-gods of the theogonies, they perverted good poetry into a dry and unintelligible jargon; and stripped Polytheism of that sensuous beauty which was its principal attraction. The Neo-Platonic school fell into the same mistake. The poetic mythology was at least true to nature: that is, to a fallen and corrupt nature. The philosophic mythologies of Gnostics and Neo-Platonists were true to nothing. In helping, therefore, to expose the absurdities of the older systems, they awakened a critical sense by which their own absurdities were exploded with the rest.

III. GNOSTIC SECTS.

Of particular sects, those which had most of the Greek element, were most unreal, and on the whole most inclined to Antinomianism. Simon Magus, Menander, and Cerinthus have been mentioned among the heretics of the first century.

*Alexandrian Gnostics.*

In the second century, Carpocrates, who probably taught in Alexandria about the time of the Emperor Hadrian, made his æon-system a cloak for incredible abominations.[11] His son Epiphanes died young, and was worshipped as a god. Of the same sort with the Carpocratians were the Antitactes, Prodicians, and many others.

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[10] Neander, *History of Dogmas.*

[11] *Community and equality*" (*i. e.*, community of goods, of wives, of everything) they represented to be "*the true divine law,* human laws put asunder what God hath put together." Clemens Alex. *Stromat.* iii.

Basilides and Valentinus, both Alexandrians, were far more intellectual, and framed systems remarkable for brilliant but perverse ingenuity.[12] There *is a God who is not*, and of whom nothing can be said. There is a *world-seed*, a great egg as it were, containing within it the germs of a spiritual, psychical, and material development. From this, developed according to numerical proportions, come the Ogdoad and Hebdomad, with their respective Archons, or world-rulers, and the Abraxas, or three hundred and sixty-five Heavens: this latter representing God, so far as He is manifested. Christ is the *nous* or highest æon, which united itself to the man Jesus at His baptism; in memory of which the followers of Basilides celebrated the baptism as *the Epiphany* on the sixth of January. The later Basilideans adopted the views of the Docetæ, and held it lawful to deny the Name of Christ. They were also grossly immoral, and were much addicted to magic, attributing a sovereign efficacy to their abraxas gems. Valentinus, the most ingenious of all the Gnostics, made his æons emanate in pairs. His Christ was apparitional or docetic, coming into the world through Mary, as water through a pipe. The sects that sprang from these leaders, especially the infamous Marcosians, were a disgrace to humanity, and brought no little scandal upon the Christian name.

*Basilides,* A.D. 125.

*Valentinus,* A.D 125-140.

*Marcosians.*

The Ophites, or Naassenes, got their name from the Ophis, Serpent,—regarding the Serpent that tempted Eve as a symbol of Sophia, Wisdom, or of Christ himself.[13] Their peculiarities gave occasion to the Heathen to accuse Christians of serpent worship. A similar blasphemy of Scripture was found among the Sethites, Cainites, and others

*Ophites.*

*Sethites, Cainites.*

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[12] For an excellent account of the tenets and different sects of the Alexandrian Gnostics, see " Some Account of the Writings and Opinions of *Clement of Alexandria*, by John Bishop of Lincoln."

[13] Or, according to others, *Sophia* was the defective female mind. For interesting remarks on these sects, see Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, vol. i. p. 35.

of the same sort. The world and its order being evil, everything that helps to destroy the world or confound its order was regarded as the struggle of the imprisoned celestial spark. Hence even the Sodomites and Judas Iscariot were by some held in religious honor.

*Syrian Gnostics.*

The Syrian or Oriental Gnostics were more decidedly dualistic in their views, and perhaps more hostile to the Old Testament.

*Saturninus.*

In their practice they were rigidly ascetic. Saturninus was the name best known among them. His followers, to avoid all contact with the evil principle or with the race of evil men, abstained from marriage and the eating of flesh.

*Bardesanes.*

A particular interest attaches to the name of Bardesanes of Edessa, once a Christian philosopher and an able defender of the Truth. He believed in two eternal principles, derived evil from matter, and denied the Resurrection. He obtained honor, however, as a confessor; and many of his writings, especially his elegant treatise on Fate, were highly esteemed in the Church.

*Cerdo.*

Cerdo, a Syrian who came to Rome early in the century, seems to have found a starting-point for his heresy in the effort to reconcile the Old Testament and the New. "The God proclaimed by Moses and the Prophets could not be the Father of Jesus Christ. For the former is known, but the latter unknown: the former is just, merely, the latter is good."[14]

*Marcion.*

Marcion, a native of Pontus, came to Rome during the episcopate of Anicetus, and adopted the same general views with Cerdo, maturing them, however, into a more advanced doctrine and discipline. Besides the difference between the God of the Old Testament and of the New,[15] he found it impossible to reconcile Christ coming to Judgment, with the Christ of the Gospels; and therefore was accused of making two Christs. As converts from his sect were rebaptized

[14] S. Hippol. *Omn. Hæres.*

[15] "The just Creator, and the good God."

on coming into the Church, it is probable that he did not use the common form of Baptism. He rejected the New Testament, except a corrupted copy of the Gospel of S. Luke, and certain portions of the Epistles. It is said that towards the end of his life he repented of his heresy.

*Apelles.*

Apelles, a disciple of Marcion, taught that Christ in descending from on high framed a body to Himself out of the four elements, of which in ascending again He became divested. This he learned from Philumena, a virgin *clairvoyante*, who lived on invisible food and had many revelations. About the end of the century, Hermogenes, a painter of Carthage, taught the eternity of matter: an unplastic material, out of which God formed, as perfectly as its stubborn nature would allow, the soul and body of man.[16]

*Hermogenes*

*Tatian.*

Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, travelled in the East after the death of his master, and originated the stern sect of the Tatianites. He regarded marriage as a corruption, and denied the possibility of Adam's salvation.

*Monoimus.*

To these, and many such like, Hippolytus adds the name of Monoïmus, an Arabian, who taught that "man is the all," and "the principle of all." His maxim was: "Seek not God, or nature, or things thereunto pertaining; but seek thyself from thyself, and say: My God is my mind, my thought, my soul, my body. Thus thou shalt find thyself in thyself, as the one and the whole."

IV.
MANI.

It was in the latter half of the third century that Gnostic dualism was moulded into its severest form by the hand of Mani, an apostate Presbyter it is said, who having been a Magian, a Christian, and possibly a Buddhist, endeavored to fuse all these systems into one. This world is a battle-ground, a confused struggle of darkness and light; the debatable land, as it were, of two great worlds, each having its own Lord, and forever arrayed in irre-

*The two Kingdoms.*

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[16] For several of these, see Tertull. *De Praescript.* 30–33.

concilable hostility to one another.[17] Each man is an image of that world-wide struggle. In a body which is darkness he has a soul which is darkness, but a soul of light, also, striving for deliverance. Christ and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of light and the Spirit of ether, attract the good soul unto themselves. These notions, adorned with poetical ascriptions to the sun and moon and stars, and with a world-system of the most intricate description, were accompanied with terribly serious views of the malignity of nature, and with an austerity dark and hard, though not devoid of a certain moral grandeur. The mouth, the hands, the heart, every member and every faculty, must be sealed.[18] By silence from all but good words, by abstinence from all but vegetable diet, by hands unstained with money, by a virginity absolutely unsullied, the flesh is to be purged, and the soul of light liberated from its loathsome dungeon. To make these maxims more effectual, the Manicheans had a discipline and worship modelled on that of the Church, but more severe, and in some respects more imposing.[19]

*Austere Views of Nature.*

*Senses Sealed.*

There was in this heresy, as in all that have been built upon an honest reception of the dualistic principle, an extraordinary vitality. Soon after Mani's death, in the last quarter of the third century, it began to make its way towards

*Vitality.*

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[17] Zoroaster, a contemporary of Darius Hystaspes, was the reformer of the Magian system. In the form he gave it, *Ormuzd*, the light-principle and fountain-head of good, and *Ahriman*, the source of darkness and of evil, were eternally generated by the infinite and almighty Essence, *Zeruane*, *Akurene*, or absolute Time. On the subject of the Barbarian Philosophies, see *Diogenes Laertius* among the Ancients, and Tenneman's *Manual of the History of Philosophy* (translated by Cousin) among modern works: also Faber on *Pagan Idolatry*. The innumerable points which Christianity has in common with Anti-Christian systems, are industriously brought together in a spirit hostile to all religion by Dunlap, *Vestiges of the Spirit History of Man*.

[18] "Signaculum oris, signaculum manuum, signaculum sinus." With these high pretensions they mixed secret abominations, almost incredible. See Augustin. *De Hæres*, cap. 46.

[19] Beausobre, *Histoire du Manichéisme;* on which see Mosheim's Criticisms, *Hist. Comment.* vol. ii.

the West; and by its ascetic rigor, its high pretensions, and its affectation of mystery, made converts not a few in Asia Minor, Italy, Sicily and North Africa. Towards the end of the same century it was prominent enough to provoke persecution, at the hand of the Emperor Diocletian.[20] Persecuted and crushed at various times, it always managed to revive; and in one shape or another continued to exist all through the middle ages.

A.D. 287.

In the meanwhile there was growing within the bosom of the Church a more dangerous enemy, though not more wicked, than either the Judaic or Gnostic heresies. These two, appealing to pseudo-spiritual or pseudo-rational proclivities, had assailed the real Humanity or proper Divinity of our Lord; so that the success of either would have involved no less than a denial of the essentials of Christian faith. The contest with them, however, was during the second century an external war. The internal struggle, during the same period, was with enemies that appeared on the *sensuous* side of religion, and appealed to the imaginative faith and emotional feelings, rather than to the sober reason of the times.

V.
SENSUOUS BIAS.

Symptoms of this, it has been already noticed, had early appeared among the Corinthian Christians, in an over-estimate of charisms, or spiritual gifts. Coveting sensible signs of the operation of the Spirit, and despising the commonplace virtues of temperance, charity, and humility, they became mere babes in Christ; and sect-spirit, or schism, one of the inevitable fruits of a carnal mind,[21] became—and to judge from S. Clement's Epistle for a long time continued—a characteristic of their Church.

*Sect Spirit.*

What happened among the Corinthians must have shown itself at times in other places. Love of the marvellous is natural to man. But the extraordinary effusion of "gifts" in the Pentecostal age, however necessary it was for a time, could not but be attended with the risk of ministering to this dangerous passion; giving occasion to disorders, which the rulers of the Church had to combat with all their might.

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[20] Diocletian's edict (Gies. § 61, n. 19) seems to have been prompted in great measure by hatred of the Persians, whose "detestable customs," he feared, might "corrupt the innocency and simplicity of Roman manners." The ringleaders of the heresy were to be "cast into the flames and burned, along with their abominable writings."

[21] Gal. v. 19, 20.

*Love of Wonders.*

In the beginning of the second century, the same carnal or psychical tendency appears under another form. As miracles became less frequent, and "gifts" almost disappeared, prophecy grew more precious to those who sought either to stimulate or to build up their faith; and the magnificent imagery of the Old and New Testaments, so elevating and inspiring to sober minds, was converted by the unlearned and unstable into a sensuous snare. The Millenarian theory, a harmless and pleasing speculation to some, became to others a sort of intoxication. In its milder form it was an opinion, founded on a literal interpretation of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, that *the saints risen from the dead at the first resurrection should reign with Christ a thousand years on earth, in a state of temporal power and felicity.* Papias, a disciple of S. John and a great collector of oral traditions, but a man of slender wit according to Eusebius, embellished this opinion with fanciful additions of a very exceptionable kind. The wicked were to serve the righteous during the thousand years of their reign. To support its enormous population, the earth was to be endowed with a marvellous fecundity. Each vine was to bear a thousand branches, each branch a thousand clusters, each cluster a thousand bunches of grapes, and each grape was to yield twenty-five measures of wine.[22] Pomps and splendors and luxuries were to abound in

*Chiliast Doctrine.*

*Millennial Reign.*

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[22] See Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. i. The doctrine was held, but probably in a more spiritual sense than here described, by Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Melito, and probably by a majority of the Church teachers of the second century. The Alexandrine School, which in the third century brought it into disrepute, were averse to its sensuous character (which they probably exaggerated), but spiritualized the text of Scripture into a very intangible meaning. The millennium was advocated by Justin M., and probably by others, from a desire to bring out clearly *the doctrine of the Resurrection,* in opposition to

similar proportions. Jerusalem was to be rebuilt. Indeed, the vision of the sacred city, radiant with every imaginable splendor, so impressed itself upon popular imagination, that, as some believed, it was actually seen for a space of forty days[23] hovering in the air just over its future site.

*New Jerusalem.*

But the Millenarian dream, tolerated for awhile among Catholics, and spreading in grosser forms among the heretical sects, was only one of innumerable symptoms of a great and growing disorder. A worse sign still was the flood of religious fictions let loose upon the Church at this period. Many of these productions were harmless enough, some were even edifying. The Shepherd of Hermas, for example, notwithstanding some questionable phrases, is evidently the work of a pious man, who avails himself of the garb of fiction without any intention to deceive.[24] We can hardly say as much for the Sibylline Books;[25] a forgery which Justin Martyr and early writers generally appealed to, without suspicion or misgiving. The Clementines, a romance already mentioned in this chapter, came out of a great nest of similar productions. Thousands of pious frauds, in short, Prophecies, Histories, Epistles, Gospels, Apocalypses, Testaments, mostly of heretical origin,[26] but ascribed to Adam, Seth, Abraham, Moses, the Apostles, the blessed Virgin, and to various

*Religious Fiction.*

*Spurious Writings.*

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those "not really Christians," who taught that "at the moment of death the soul would be taken right up into heaven." He therefore contended, that "not only would there be a resurrection of the dead, but a millennium in Jerusalem . . . as all the prophets have predicted." *Dial. cum Tryphon.* 80. It has been well remarked, that as belief in the millennium declined, the notion of a *purgatory* took its place. See note on this subject to Oxf. Trans. of Tertullian, p. 120.

[23] Tertull. *Adv. Marcion.* iii. 25.

[24] This work, and the Epistle of Barnabas, are placed on very good authority in the first century: the argument against their early origin being of no great force. See Gieseler, *Church Hist.* § 35 (Smith's Am. ed.). See also Lee, *on Inspiration;* and Wake's *Apostol. Fathers.*

[25] *Sibyllina Oracula,* etc., Servatii Gallæi, etc., etc. Amstelodami, 1689.

[26] Epiphanius mentions as many as six thousand, of Gnostic authorship. Irenæus speaks of them as countless.

other worthies, Jewish, Christian, and Heathen, circulated through innumerable obscure channels, and ministered to the fleshly enthusiasm from which they sprang.

*The Encratites.*

To perils of this kind must be added a growing fondness for the ascetic or encratite[27] virtues. Virginity could not long be content with the qualified praise bestowed upon it by S. Paul. Second marriages were allowed to human infirmity, but, in an age that called for extraordinary and heroic virtues, infirmity was not apt to be regarded with particular favor. The martyr spirit[28] was immoderately applauded: on the other hand, denial of the faith at the hour of trial, and even attempts at evasion, were likely to be considered by many unpardonable sins. Excesses in this direction did not go, however, entirely unrebuked. The martyrs at Lyons, as we have seen, and it may be said the School of S. John in general, were distinguished by a noble moderation; by encraty, or temperance, in the truest sense of the word.[29] But as persecution became more virulent, enthusiasm more lively, and especially as the philosopher's cloak, the badge of a proud austerity,

*Excesses rebuked.*

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[27] The name Encratites (from *encrateia*, continence, temperance) covers a great many sects; and may properly be used as a generic term.

[28] Or rather the *act* of martyrdom; for it was a symptom of the sensuous tendency, that the word *martyr*, which applies to all who bear a true Christian witness before men, came to be restricted to a small and not in all cases exemplary class.

[29] Among the fragments attributed to S. Ignatius, we find the following: Virginitatis jugum nemini impone. Periculosa quippe res est, et servatu difficilis, quando necessitate fit. Junioribus ante nubere permitte, quam cum scortis corrumpantur. But the general sound feeling of the Church is best shown in the 50th Apostolic Canon: "If a bishop, a priest, or a deacon, or any ecclesiastic abstain from marriage, from flesh, or from wine, not for practice in self-denial, but from contempt, forgetting that God made everything very good, that He made both the male and the female—in fact, even blaspheming the creation: he shall either retract his error, or be deposed and cast out of the Church. A layman also shall be treated in like manner." In the same way, clerical ascetics were compelled to eat flesh and drink wine *once*, that their abstinence on other occasions might not be attributed to a belief that these things were evil in themselves. *Ancyra*, Can. 14.

was more and more seen in the Church, the line between proper self-discipline and intolerant severity was soon obliterated, or at least disregarded.

*Tatianites.*

Tatian, a converted Philosopher, and for some time an associate of Justin Martyr at Rome, was content during the lifetime of the latter to indulge a certain severity to himself, without making his own practice a rule of obligation for others. Afterwards he travelled in the East and fell into Gnostic errors. The sects that adopted or developed his notions (Tatianites, Severians, from names of their leaders; or, Encratites, Puritans, from their professions of continence, temperance, and pure religion) spread through all parts of the East and West. They condemned matrimony, abstained entirely from flesh and wine, and some of them (Hydroparastatæ, or Aquarians) forbade the use of the latter, even in the Eucharist. The Apotactites, renouncers of the good things of this world, Apostolics, imitators of primitive poverty, Saccophori, scrip-bearers, are still later varieties of the same sensuous spirit,[30] disguised under a thin veil of ostentatious simplicity or severity of manners.

*Puritani.*

*Aquarii and others.*

VI.
MONTANUS.

Among the idolatrous nations of antiquity, the Phrygians were distinguished for those ungovernable transports of sensuous enthusiasm which S. Paul justly lays to the charge of heathenism in general. "Ye know," says he to the Corinthians, "that ye were Gentiles, *carried away* unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led." This "carrying away" was known under the name of *ecstasy*. It could be brought about by loud shouts, piercing cries, and even by the clang of instrumental music.[31] In addition to these, however,

*Phrygian Ecstasy.*

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[30] The theoretic notions of some of these sects were less popular than their austere manners. Thus dualism was prevalent among them; the doctrine of Satan's independent power; and (most offensive of all to the common Christian feeling) a belief that Adam was hopelessly damned.

[31] "Tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum
Concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,
Et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentes;" etc.
Lucretii, *De R. N.* ii. 620.

*Corybantic Frenzy.*

arts were employed not unlike the "mesmerism" and "spiritualism" of modern times. Accordingly, at certain seasons, the Phrygian population, male and female, especially the latter, excited themselves into fits of Corybantic frenzy, under the influence of which they exhibited those psychical phenomena which, wherever doctrine and discipline are subordinated to passion, are still familiar to the experience of the religious world.

*Phrygian Christians.*

When the Phrygians were converted to Christianity, this sensuous spirit seems to have departed for a season. The Gospel gave food for the mind, as well as a stimulus to the affections.[32] It transformed the wild irregularity of religious impulse into the decency and order of religious life. Society was not only cleansed: it was clothed, as it were, and restored to its right mind.

*The Old Evil returns.*

But about the middle of the second century, symptoms of the old malady began to reappear. It was a time undoubtedly of general excitability. Miraculous powers still lingered in the Church, or were still fondly cherished in popular imagination. There was a presentiment of the end of the world near at hand. Wild dreams of millennial glories were fondly listened to, and generally encouraged. Under these circumstances, a little flock of simple Christians gathered for devotional exercises in some retired spot—in a cemetery, perhaps, or around the tomb of an honored martyr—and engaged, it may have been, in fasting or in watching, is suddenly startled from its sobriety by one of its members falling into a trance. The "ecstasy" is accompanied with wild babblings and rapturous demonstrations. The subject of it, while in the trance or on awaking, has a dream to tell, a wonderful and transporting vision. The thing soon becomes a decided epidemic.[33] It speeds from man to man, from congregation to congregation. The Clergy at first can make little of it. Afterwards, as they perceive the danger, they strive to check the contagion, to dispel the delusion. But their efforts are all in vain. Enthusiasm degenerates so easily into self-deception, and self-deception is so rapidly corrupted into a half-unconscious effort to draw in others, that to unveil a lying wonder is often the surest way for a time to increase the infatuation of the multitude who have been deluded by it.

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[32] The Westminster Review (No. cxliii.), in a very narrow-minded article on Christian Revivals, accuses the whole early Church of fostering these excitements. It forgets that Truth was always put foremost by Church teachers as the sanctifying power; and that Truth was proclaimed, not in a popular, hortatory way, but in a sober, argumentative style, which appeals to the understanding even more than to the affections. To test the question, let any one try to get up a revival (in the reviewer's sense of the word) by reading to people the Sermon on the Mount, the Epistles of S. Paul, or any of the homilies of the early Fathers.

*Epidemic Frenzy.*

Montanus, a convert from heathenism, and once, it is said, a Priest of Cybele, is commonly cited by the ancients as the author of the Phrygian frenzy; bringing it about in connection with two prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla, by artful devices of his own. It is far more probable that he was originally a victim of it. Sharing in the common delusion, he had the tact and intellectual skill to become its interpreter and director.

*Montanus.* *Maximilla.* *Priscilla.*

The Church, he reasoned, in growing older, ought to grow wiser and more sober. Patriarchal times had been the infancy of Religion, Judaism the childhood, Pentecost the glowing and exuberant youth. Each of these periods had been inaugurated by signs; each had been followed by a development of doctrine, and by a tightening of the bands of discipline and morals. Now, a new and more spiritual era is manifestly approaching. The world is nodding to its fall. The powers of evil are rallying their forces for the great and decisive battle. The Holy Ghost, the Paraclete promised to the Apostles, who has partially manifested Himself in the wonders of Pentecostal times, is coming upon the Church with a mightier demonstration of spiritual power.

*Theory of Development.*

*The End near.*

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[33] The resemblance of this ecstasy to mesmeric phenomena is pointed out by Gieseler, in Tertullian, *De Animâ*, 9. See also Münteri, *Primord. Eccles. Afric.* cap. xxii.

Youth is settling into manhood. With new wonders, then, new revelations, new knowledge, there must be a new girding up of the loins of the Church mind; a stricter discipline, a more perfect organization, a more complete subjection of the flesh to the inspiring and energizing Spirit.[34]

*Greater Strictness needed.*

Hence an adoption at once of all the encratite notions current at that day. Second marriages, and even all marriages not solemnized in Church, were regarded as adultery. Absolution, especially for mortal sins, was to be at least grudgingly accorded. To avoid persecution was to fall from the faith. For one Lent they had three, besides other fasts, half fasts, and seasons of dry food only.[35] Some abstained altogether from flesh and wine. All professed to go far beyond the practice of the Church, in sobriety of dress and of manner, in condemning amusements, in cultivating a rigid and marked austerity in all the relations of daily life.

*Encratite Notions adopted.*

In the same way the Millenarian theory, and other notions of a stimulating kind, clustered around Montanism by a natural and irresistible affinity. Pepuza, a town of Phrygia, where

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[34] The views of Montanus come to us through the medium of Tertullian's vigorous mind; who in his tract, *De Virgin. Veland.* 1, brings out finely the notion of *development* as opposed to custom or prescription.

[35] See Natalis Alexander, tom. v., *Dissertat.* iv.; Kaye's *Tertullian;* Bingham's *Antiquities;* Beveridge, *Can. Cod.* lib. 3, *De Jejun. Quadrages.* It is probable from Tertull. *De Jejun.* ii., *De Orat.* xiv., and from Irenæus *Ap. Euseb.* v. 24, that the only fast generally obligatory (except before baptism or ordination) was on Good Friday, Easter Eve, or (*Constitut. Apostol.* v. 14) the whole of Passion-week. The forty days of Lent were observed, however, with more or less of strictness: as also the station-days (Wednesday and Friday) of each week, when abstinence was practised till three o'clock. Among the Catholics, however, these observances were "of choice not of command," which gave Tertullian occasion, in his sharp way, to twit the Catholics with inconsistency, viz., that they observed more than they were willing to enjoin. *De Jejun.* ii. The arguments, by the way, which he puts in the mouths of Catholics against the stricter views of the Montanists, are precisely those which are employed in modern times against the excessive legality of Roman Catholic fasts.

Maximilla began her prophetic career, was venerated as the site of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The prophets kept excitement at fever heat by predictions of wars, persecutions, and of a great and final judgment immediately impending; predictions which signally failed in this instance, but which none the less served their purpose for a time.

*Chiliast Theory adopted.*

As the Clergy quite unanimously rejected the new doctrine, it was necessary for Montanus to organize a ministry of his own.[36] This he did consistently with his principle (that the Catholic Church, namely, was *psychical* and *carnal*, and therefore imperfect) by ordaining Patriarchs and Cenones over the heads of the Bishops; thus degrading the successors of the Apostles, says S. Jerome, to the third rank in the Ministry. As his ministry stood on the prophetic rather than the sacerdolal basis, he could also consistently with his principles admit women to it; prophetesses[37] being known in all the early ages.

*Ministry Prophetic.*

*Females admitted.*

The assertion that Montanus believed himself to be the Paraclete, probably arose from the distinction commonly made between the Phrygian inspiration, so called, and the inspiration attributed by the Church to Prophets and Apostles. In the latter, neither reason, will, nor anything pertaining to man's integrity, is abolished or superseded. But Montanus professed to be an unconscious organ of the

*The Ecstasy unconscious.*

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[36] The Montanists also fell back upon the inherent kingly priesthood of the private Christian. Tertull. *De Exhortat. Castitat.* vii.: in which he argues that, as laymen partake of the priestly office and do priestly acts (et offers, et tinguis, et sacerdos es tibi solus), they ought also to come under the strict discipline of priestly lives. It may be observed that this priestly character of the congregation enters into all true Liturgies; but was more apparent in the early Church, because the offerings (first fruits, etc.) were more tangible: the distinction between the old Law and the new, in this respect, being, according to Irenæus, iv. 18, 2, that what was then done in a servile way, is now done freely: quippe cum jam non a servis, sed a liberis offeratur. See *Gieseler*, § 53, notes 5, 16.

[37] Thiersch, the Irvingite historian, distinguishes in like manner between teaching and prophesying—the one being prohibited to women, the other not.

spirit.[38] The Spirit, throwing him into an *ecstasy*, into an irrational, impersonal, irresponsible condition, breathed through him as a musician through a flute; so that the phrase, *thus saith the Prophet*, would be no more proper in his case than to say, thus says the mouth, or thus writes the pen, or thus plays the harp.

*Character of Montanus.*

Other absurdities and blasphemies attributed to Montanus, are so manifestly taken from vague rumor, or from hostile interpretation, that little credit can be given them at the present day. It seems improbable also, that he was such a simpleton as is sometimes represented. Respectable powers of mind, great austerity of life, and even practical good sense within a certain range, may coexist with absurdities bordering on insanity; and the consistency of Montanism in itself, as well as the strong and broad hold it gained in large portions of the world, seem to bear witness to the intellectual ability, and in the popular sense of the word, to the sincerity of its author.

*Spread of the New Prophecy*

*in the West.*

At all events, Montanism became the popular heresy of the day. Its encratic principles recommended it to some; its fervid enthusiasm carried away others. Phrygia and Galatia were overrun by it. The light of the golden candlestick of Thyatira was extinguished by it for nearly a century. From the East it flew swiftly to the West; and in Rome one of the Bishops, towards the end of the century, most probably Victor, was disposed for awhile to look favorably upon it, and indeed sent letters of peace to the new prophets. In North Africa it took deeper root. Wherever it spread, its followers, calling themselves "spiritual," and despising the Catholics as "carnal," or abhorring them as enemies of the Spirit, were distinguished by a severity and simplicity of life which disposed many earnest men to look favorably upon them.

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[38] The difference between the orthodox and the Montanist idea of inspiration is well treated in Lee, on the *Inspiration of H. S.* lect. v.; see also Kaye's *Justin M.* chap. ix.

So mighty a movement in the sensuous direction as that of the Montanist, Encratite, and even Gnostic sects (for the Gnostics became sensuous as soon as they formed into sects), could not fail to arouse the elements of a powerful reaction. Among the Montanists themselves, there arose a party holding views which were afterwards known in the Church as Sabellian.[39] These, however, were probably men ignorant of theology, who, absorbed in their doctrine of the Paraclete, confounded with Him the other Persons of the Trinity.

VII. RATIONALIST REACTION.

The Alogi, deniers of the Logos of S. John's Gospel, were inclined to doubt the reality of spiritual gifts, and to reject the Apocalypse and Gospel of S. John.[40] In fact, the doctrine of the millennium, the mission of the Spirit, and the mystery of a manifold Divine operation in the human heart, had been so vilified by the sensuous trail of heretical interpretation, that impatient minds were naturally disgusted. A skeptical spirit had also been provoked by over sharp distinctions between the Persons of the Trinity. The doctrine of Subordination was so maintained by some, as to give a handle for the charge of Tritheism. To avoid errors on this side, many were led to contend for the doctrine of the Divine *Monarchy*, either by denying the Divinity of Jesus Christ, or by making Him a mere temporary embodiment or manifestation of the Father. Among those who carried this reaction to the extreme, Theodotus the Tanner, Theodotus the Money-changer, and Artemas or Artemon, were particularly prominent. They rejected the Divinity of Christ. From a notion of one of them,[41] that Christ was inferior in the priesthood to that mysterious personage, Melchizedek, his followers got the name of Melchizedekians.

*The Alogi, Monarchians.*

*Tritheism.*

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[39] Tertullian, *De Præscript. Hæret.* 52, mentions two sects of Montanists, those who followed Proculus, and those who followed Æschines; the latter maintained that the Father and the Son are one Person.

[40] S. Irenæus, iii. 11, cited in Gies. § 48.

[41] Tertullian, *De Præscript. Hæres.* 53.

*Praxeas, Patripassians.*

Praxeas, coming to Rome from the East, at the time when Victor was favoring the new Prophets, by his arguments and representations undeceived the Roman Pontiff; but afterwards reasoned himself into a heresy more ruinous and hardly more rational than the one he had exposed.[42] In explaining the doctrine of the Trinity, possibly with a view to cut away the ground from under the Montanist delusion, he laid himself open to the charge of *Patripassianism;* contending that He who suffered on the cross was not in substance only, but in person, one with the Father.

*Rationalist Temper.*

In this way the philosophizing spirit came back into the Church, where it secured a foothold, from which it was not dislodged for several ages.[43] Indeed, it has never been dislodged: for the habit of explaining the mysteries of the Gospel having once come in on the side of error, it was found necessary to employ it on the side of Truth.

*In Rome.*

The Church of Rome was particularly troubled in this way. Noëtus, who taught in Asia Minor about the end of the second century, held the same view as Praxeas in a more philosophic shape; and Epigonus and Cleomenes, his disciples, preaching in the imperial city, were more or less favored by Zephyrinus and Callistus. How far these Roman Bishops were implicated in the heresy, it is hard so say. With the Artemonites on one side denying the divinity of Christ, and with the Patripassians on the other exalting His divinity at the expense of His personality, they were certainly in a difficult position. It is to their credit that Theodotus and Artemon were promptly condemned.

The same promptitude was shown in the case of Sabellius, who flourished also in the first half of the third century, and expounded the doctrine of the Trinity in a way which has proved as difficult to explain as the original doctrine itself. The sum of his teaching would seem to be this: *God is a monad, expanded into a triad.*[44] As man is one, yet we distinguish in him the body (that is, the whole frame corporeal and spiritual), and *the soul* (which again stands for the whole man), and *the spirit* (of which the same is to be said); or as the sun is one, yet we distinguish the round body and the light and the heat: so God is one, yet the Father, the Son, and the Spirit may each express in His own way the fulness of the expanded or contracted Godhead. Like all analogies of the kind, this is capable of being interpreted in many different senses. It may stand for a Trinity of modes,[45] a Trinity of emanations, a Trinity of three divine energies.[46] If rigidly pressed, it would certainly lead to a denial of the proper personality of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And this last consequence Sabellius seems to have accepted. He admitted *prosopa*, persons, but only in the dramatic sense; characters, to be put on or put off, for particular dispensations. In the effort to give a rational account of his doctrine on the positive side, he doubtless encountered difficulties, which it was easier to evade by illustrations than to meet and vanquish by intelligible definitions.

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[42] "Praxeas, in Rome, accomplished two works of the devil: he cast out prophecy and brought in heresy; he banished the Paraclete and crucified the Father." Tertullian, *Adv. Praxeam.* c. I. Tertullian intimates that Victor was *silent* with regard to the heresy of Praxeas.

[43] An anonymous writer in *Euseb.* v. 28, dwells much on the fondness of these heretics for syllogisms, and for Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Galen. They were much addicted also to mathematical studies.

*Sabellius.*

*Monad and Triad.*

Somewhat later than Sabellius, Beryllus, Bishop of Bostra in Arabia, taught that Christ before the Incarnation had no personal existence,[47] and that He has no proper divinity of His own, but only that of the Father dwelling in Him. He denied also the existence of a human soul in Christ, the indwelling Deity supplying its place. When confuted by Origen on this latter point, in an Arabian Synod holden near the middle of the third century, he also abandoned the former error.

*Beryllus.*

A.D. 244.

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[44] S. Athanas. *c. Arian. Or.* iv. 12, 13; for other statements of his doctrine, see Gieseler, *Ch. H.* § 60, n. 10 (Smith's Am. ed.). In the *monad* there was a power of contraction and expansion—*systole* and *ektasis*.

[45] S. Basil. *ep.* 210, 214. [46] *Epiphan. Hæres.* lxii. 1. [47] Euseb. vi. 33.

*Paul of Samosata.*

Somewhat later still, Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, taught a kind of deification of the blameless man Jesus, by an impersonal, indwelling Logos.[48]

VIII. SCHOOLS AND PARTIES.

While many in this way were seduced by a philosophizing spirit into open heresy, there were innumerable others who speculated to the utmost limit of the rule of faith, and perplexed simple souls by subtle distinctions and analogies.[49] The Logos of S. John was to philosophic minds particularly suggestive. God *silent* might be distinguished from God speaking, or the Word *immanent* in the Father from the Word forthgoing into creation or redemption, in such a way as to express any amount of vital truth, or to cover any amount of dangerous error.

*School of Progress.*

The same may be said of the theories of *emissions*, *processions*, *emanations*, *expansions*, and the like, by which the relation of the Son to the Father was sometimes more clearly than satisfactorily explained. Justin Martyr, with his contemporaries Athenagoras and Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, the Alexandrine School, and in the West Hippolytus and Tertullian, were among the most active in these efforts to give what may be called a philosophic expression to the Faith commonly received.

*Traditionary School.*

On the other hand, the cautious, traditionary, reverential school, which lingered to the end of the second century in the person of Irenæus,[50] was wary of the use of scientific terms, and taught the doctrine of the Trinity in the language of Scripture and the Creeds. Of the others also it may be said, that the terms in which they taught may be distinguished from those in which they *explained*,[51] the latter being, as a general rule, more open to suspicion.

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[48] See Book III. ch. 5.

[49] On the subject of the remainder of this chapter there are many modern writers of first-rate abiilty; see particularly Burton, *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers*, and Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*. In the latter are concise summaries of the results of German criticism. See also Neander, *Hist. of Christ. Dogmas*.

[50] "If any one shall ask, *How* was the Son produced from the Father?—we answer, No one knows . . . save alone the Father who begat and the Son who was begotten." S. Iren. *Adv. Hæres.* ii. 28. In the same way he ridicules those theological *obstetricians*, who professing in one breath that "His generation is indescribable," go on in the next to describe His generation and forthgoing, by such analogies as "a word emitted from a thought." "That a word is emitted from a thought is what everybody knows. It is therefore *no great discovery they make* who talk about emissions, and apply the term to

*Conservative Spirit.*

The traditionary ground, however, could not be retained, without at all events a thorough examination. Christianity as a Truth, or rather as *the* Truth, offered a constant challenge to the philosophic world. But to maintain that challenge she was forced in a measure to adopt the language of the Schools, and to answer a multitude of questions which the mass of simple believers would never have thought of asking. As Origen intimates, the generality of those who called themselves Christians, knowing nothing but *Jesus Christ and Him crucified*, thought they had the whole *Logos* in the Word made flesh. A lower class (the Ebionites or Nazarenes) thought they had the whole when they recognized Jesus as *the Son of David*. But the higher man rises in the intellectual scale, the deeper is the significance of that question, What think ye of Christ? It was a matter of simple necessity, then, that the Truth revealed to the Church should undergo a theoretic scrutiny, and that distinctions which readily occurred to speculative minds should be at first overlooked, or dimly apprehended, and should afterwards, before they were settled,[52]

*Faith and Knowledge.*

*Questions and Distinctions.*

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the only begotten Word of God; likening Him whom they call indescribable and unutterable . . . to a word uttered or emitted by man." In other words, Irenæus saw the fallacy, common to thinkers of all ages, of imagining that by giving new names to things they shed new light upon them.

[51] Even Irenæus is accused (by Duncker and others) of hopeless self-contradiction, because his constant assertion of the equality of the Father and the Son can be coupled with such phrases as "the Father is above all, being Himself the head of the Son."

[52] Some theories served as a *scaffolding*, so to speak: *e.g.*, the doctrine of *subordination*, which, before the distinctions of *substance*, *person*, and *office* were generally apprehended, enabled philosophic minds to hold to the personality of the Son. The same is to be said of the analogies—such as *fire* lighting *fire*, *thoughts* emitting *words*, etc., etc. Among the terms finally adopted

give rise to variations of expression, or even to mutual distrust and misapprehension.

*Two Offices of the Church.*

*Freedom of Opinion.*

*Fixed Limits of Belief.*

The Church, in fact, had two works before her. The one was to hold the simple Creed. The other was to frame those noble instruments, the Latin and Greek tongues, into a fitness for the expression of all that the Creed contains. The latter task devolved upon the Schools; the former upon the Church itself—upon the common sense, that is, of believers as a body. To meet both requirements, fixed limits of belief were essential; but within those limits a reasonable freedom of private speculation.[53] Accordingly, amid all the uncertainties arising from illusive analogies or inadequate definitions, three points at least remained fixed in the general consciousness of the Church. God is one: Christ is God: Christ is a Person distinct from the Person of the Father. Within those limits, which in ordinary teaching were respected even by those who in their larger flights of speculation seemed to disregard them, no little freedom was allowed. But when those limits were transcended by any teacher, however eminent in his position or distinguished for his abilities; when, in other words, either the proper divinity or the distinct personality of the Son of God was denied; then the Churchly and orthodox instinct made itself felt. In the same way, the undeviating direction of belief was seen in the fact that the drift of all discussion was to bring out more fully and more fairly, against the Gnostics, the real and perfect humanity of our Lord.

In points of secondary interest there was equal activity of

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in the Church were the *trias* of Theophilus, the *trinitas* of Tertullian, the *eternal generation* of Origen: the *homoousion* had a harder struggle, being much favored by the Sabellians, and associated more or less with notions of *division* or *expansion*. See Hagenbach, §§ 40–46.

[53] Bishop Bull, *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, champions the substantial orthodoxy of the ante-Nicene fathers: Petavius, the learned Jesuit, *De Theologicis Dogmaticis*, impugns it. More recent writers are found in countless numbers on either side.

mind, with more room for philosophizing. The Apologist naturally undertook to answer the many subtle questions with which his accomplished predecessor the Sophist had wearied himself to little or no purpose. Hence the *origin of evil*, the *eternity of matter*, the *nature of spirit* and of *body*, or of *souls, angels, demons;* and, in fact, a multiplicity of problems, physical or metaphysical, were answered by guesses more or less ingenious, and more or less supported by texts of Scripture interpreted according to the science of the times.[54] At the bottom of all this there was a real thirst for knowledge. There was something, too, of the old ambition of the Sophists: a desire to appear to know everything, or perhaps a more creditable wish, though not more reasonable, that the Church should be shown to have the keys to all kinds of science. From whichever cause it came, the passion for opening mysteries soon passed the bounds of moderation among a large class of teachers; leading in all the great schools to a bias more or less heretical, and preparing the way for a long and deadly conflict with new shapes of evil.

*Minor Points.*

*Spirit of Inquiry.*

But the bringing out of a true Christian gnosis from the rich stores of Revelation was none the less a real and necessary task; towards the fulfilment of which each great division of the Church was led by a sure instinct to do its own part. The more practical West, headed by Rome and North Africa, directed its attention mainly to questions of Church life; and in theology was more solicitous to guard the traditional belief than curiously to explore its philosophic meaning. Irenæus, in the spirit of the school of Polycarp, appealed to the tradition,[55] or common teaching,

*Three Chief Schools.*

*The West.*

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[54] See Mosheim's *Commentaries*, art. on Origen.

[55] This was a purely practical ground; and it is easy to see (the principal passages are given in Gieseler, § 51) that it meant nothing more than the *common belief*, as opposed either to *secret traditions* or private speculations. Hence Rome was entitled to particular weight, as being a centre of universal resort, a point of *confluence* to opinions and traditions from all quarters:—"in quâ semper *ab his qui sunt undique* conservata est ea quæ est ab apostolis traditio." See Book III. chap. iv. of this History.

of the Apostolic Churches. Tertullian, in like manner, laid no little stress on *prescription*, and on the rule of faith, "una omnino sola immobilis et irreformabilis." In controversy, however, with Praxeas and the patripassian heresy, he was driven, as usual in controversy, into the erection of those hastily formed defences which may be called the field-works of theology:[56] theories which crumble of themselves as soon as they have served their temporary purpose. Rome, being about equally beset by the patripassian and the subordination doctrine, kept in the main a steady balance between the two. Novatian, the famous schismatic, argued solidly and clearly for the orthodox belief. Dionysius, Bishop in the latter half of the third century, made the nearest approach, perhaps, of any theologian during that period, to the exact *via media* of the Nicene definitions.[57] On the whole, however, the West was more distinguished for holding the Faith, than for shedding much light upon it. In the East it was almost the reverse. Everything tended there towards refined and subtle speculations. In the two great schools of Antioch in Syria, and Alexandria in Egypt, the one distinguished for its rational, the other for its ultra-spiritual bias, numberless questions were opened and explored, many positions were taken which proved untenable, and the minds of the learned were more or less troubled; but the result, on the whole, was an advance in the direction of a lively understanding of the Creed, as not merely "a rule of belief," but rather an all-pervading essence and spirit of the truth. Thus the East and the West, or more precisely Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, supplied one another's deficiencies; and were the threefold cord of witness, as it were, by which every word of the common trust became more firmly bound upon the minds and consciences of believers.

*Rome.*

*The East.*

*Rome, Alexandria, Antioch.*

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[56] He is liable to the charge of *subordinationism*, Tertull. *Adv. Prax.* ii.; and therefore had to defend himself against the charge of *tritheism*: *Adv. Prax.* iii.

[57] See Gieseler, § 66, n. 16.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HERESIES HOW MET.—COUNCIL.

*Heresies divided and disintegrated.*

Of the vast flood of heresies, partly enumerated and described in the preceding chapter, the same general account may be given as of the waters poured forth from the mouth of the dragon who persecuted the Woman of the Apocalypse; the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up. They were not vanquished by wisdom, or by mental prowess only; though logic in every form was vigorously employed against them: it was rather that they destroyed themselves; being providentially divided and subdivided, flowing into sect-channels which became ever more narrow and more shallow, till, gradually absorbed into heathenism, they so disappeared and came to naught.

*Age of Dialectics.*

The Gnostic systems especially had in them no principle of union, or even of cohesion. Their existence, therefore, is chiefly interesting as showing the mental subtlety and activity of the times, and as in part accounting for that transition which took place, from an age of simple faith to one of dialectics and polemical discussion. It was gnosticism, in fact, which awakened the Church to a consciousness of her vast intellectual resources. In the presence of this great development of heathen wisdom, she felt that she must convince the minds as well as win the hearts of men. From the high ground of simple dogma she must descend into the arena of philosophic disputation. The candle of the Gospel, once lighted, could not be hid under a bushel. It must shed its light upon that medley of loose notions by which the world was distracted.

By a natural instinct, therefore, and in the main a healthy one, the successors of Polycarp and Pothinus departed more and more from the quiet ways of these venerable fathers, and threw themselves earnestly into the great battles of the day.

*Weapons of Faith.*

The contest with the Montanist and other sensuous heresies had a similar effect: though, in this case, the energies of the Church were drawn into a different channel, and questions of discipline or order attracted the chief attention. When the Phrygian enthusiasm first broke out, the Clergy, strong in simple faith, and unaccustomed to the use of dialectic weapons, were for a little while content to *exorcise* the evil. They soon found that it was a spirit not so easily allayed. Though such men as "Zoticus of Comana and Julian of Apamea, eminent Bishops of the Church," attempted "to examine the babbling spirit, their tongues were bridled," we are told, "by a certain Themison and his followers." In the same way, "the blessed Sotas in Anchialus wished to cast out the dæmon from Priscilla, but the hypocrites would not allow him." Some who made similar efforts from motives of vainglory not only failed, but became themselves victims of the contagious disorder.[1] Others were satisfied to avoid, or simply rebuke, the possession, and by this prudent course escaped injury themselves, but do not seem to have been able to neutralize its power. The Phrygian ecstasy, in short, was a phenomenon by which the wisest heads were not a little puzzled. If it was, what religious men believed, a demoniacal possession,[2] it was manifestly one of that kind which requires something more than adjuration to cast it out.

*Exorcism fails.*

*Reason appealed to.*

Under these circumstances, it is highly interesting to observe, as the necessity of confuting the new doctrine became more apparent, how cautiously the simple faith of the times girded itself, as it were, for the unwelcome task.[3] "For a long time urged," remarks one, "to write a discourse against the heresy, *I have been somewhat in doubt until now*, not indeed for want of argument to confute the false doctrine, but from a fearful apprehension *lest I should seem to be uttering new precepts*, or to be adding something to that doctrine of the New Testament, which no one who would live according to the Gospel should add to or diminish." With many such misgivings, the controversy after awhile was fairly inaugurated. Apollinaris of Hierapolis in Asia; Miltiades, a philosopher, Apologist, and historian; Serapion, the eighth Bishop of Antioch; Apollonius, who wrote just forty years after Montanus arose, and many other leading minds of the day, met the new prophets in oral disputation and in writing; or fortified the faith of believers with copious proofs from the Scriptures, that ecstasy was a mark of diabolic rather than of divine inspiration. The question thus opened was one of the most difficult in religion, and was most elaborately discussed. That the Spirit does not overpower or extinguish, but elevates and quickens the natural powers of man; that even under the hand of the Most High, the prophet is not a mere instrument or organ, but rather a laborer together with God; that, in short, the man inspired is a man in full possession of his reason, was argued with great ability from the Old Testament and the New; and in the development of this argument a new impulse was given to the critical study of the Scriptures. "The false prophet," it was contended,[4] "is carried away by a vehement ecstasy devoid of shame or apprehension. Let the followers of Montanus show, that any in the Old or New Testament were thus violently agitated and carried away in spirit: that Agabus, or Judas, or Silas, or the daughters of Philip, or Ammias in Philadelphia, or Quadratus, or others such-like, ever acted in this way." Thus, gifts of prophetic power were not declared impossible; the church, in fact, generally believed in their con-

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[1] Euseb. v. 16, 19.

[2] The alternate elation and dejection of the victims of this delusion are described by Euseb. v. 16. Its analogy to phenomena in modern "Spiritualism" must strike every one who has looked into this remarkable frenzy.

*Wholesome dread of Novelties.*

*Operation of the Spirit.*

*True Prophets and False.*

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[3] Euseb. v. 16.

[4] Euseb. v. 17.

tinuance, or at least in their occasional reappearance: it was merely contended that the claim to such gifts should be tested by the rules of reason, common-sense, and Holy Scripture.

*Spirits Tried.*

But in this general resort to reason and dialectic skill, it was not forgotten that the Church is in a special sense the witness to the Truth; and that it is her office to confute error by the force of united testimony, as well as by the weapons of argument and persuasion.

*The Church a Witness.*

Whether Provincial Synods[5] had been held before the rise of the Phrygian delusion, the silence of antiquity leaves uncertain. Gnosticism, perhaps, was too remote from the sympathies of believers, or too obviously at variance with the Creed, to need any formal or united testimony against it. It appealed to philosophic minds, and such minds could meet it with philosophic weapons. But Montanism was eminently a popular delusion. Its prominent features were but slight exaggerations of errors more or less tolerated, or even of truths or half-truths commonly received. It had been warmed into life in the very bosom of the Church. And as with Montanism, so with the rationalistic errors that arose in the controversy with it. While Christians everywhere acknowledged one supreme and only God, and everywhere confessed in this Godhead the Names of three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; yet with regard to the great mystery of the Three in One there had been little controversy, and consequently little need of subtle definitions. Plausible misstate-

*Synods.*

*Their Necessity.*

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[5] The Apostolic Councils mentioned in the Acts (i. vi. xv.) are a more than sufficient precedent for the Synods of later times, inasmuch as the Apostles, being individually inspired, had less need to confer with one another or with the Elders and Brethren. It may be observed of these Councils, that (1) there was particular business before each; (2) special prayer for divine guidance; (3) business proposed and so far as necessary discussed; (4) a decision pronounced, agreed to by all present and put forth in the name of all: see Acts i. 16, 24; vi. 5; xv. 22, 23. Venerable Bede supposes that the Assembly in Acts, xxi. 18, was also a Council: namely, a Council of the Jerusalem Church.

ments, therefore, of the doctrine of the Church, especially if found available in the war against Montanus, might easily obtain currency among a large number of believers. From an instinctive feeling of danger on this side, the Bishops fell back upon the Catholic unity of the Church, or, in fact, upon the collegiate type of the ministerial office; were more frequent than hitherto in conference and correspondence; and Synods, at first occasional, afterwards more regular, and at length once or twice a year, became in a short time the settled order of things. It is not improbable, however, that such Councils had been holden from time to time, long before they began to make a figure in Church history.[6] The primitive Church, as a general rule, took very little pains to record its own beginnings.

*First occasional, then regular.*

In these early Councils the proceedings seem to have been of a very simple character. The Brethren came together; namely, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, in the presence of the People; and united their voices and subscriptions in testimony to the Truth, or in condemnation of some error. Thus the Martyrs of Lyons, when in prison, formed a kind of *concilium*, and as such bore their witness against the heresy of Montanus. So, in a letter of Serapion of Antioch, quoted by Eusebius, there are subscriptions of several Bishops: for example, "I, Aurelius Cyrenius, a Witness;" or, "Ælius Publius Julius, Bishop of Debeltum, a colony of Thrace, as sure as God lives in Heaven." In another early Synod, headed by Apollonius of Corinth,[7] it is mentioned that with the signatures many testimonies of the Scriptures were inserted: "to show that their zeal was against the wicked sects, not against the persons of the sectarians."

*United Witness to the Truth.*

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[6] One of the earliest on record (after Apostolic times) is said to have been holden in Sicily, about A.D. 125, against one Heracleon, a follower of Valentinus, who taught that *sin in the baptized is no longer sin.* See Mansi, *Concilia.* For others, see Routh's *Reliqu. Sacr.*

[7] Mansi, *Concilia,* tom. i. p. 681. The proceedings of the African Council, appended to S. Cyprian's works, will give a clear idea of the way in which things were managed in those bodies.

It is probable that the passion of legislation, the besetting sin of assemblies of this kind, was little felt before the middle or towards the end of the third century. The earliest canons are aimed chiefly at two extremes:[8] a proud ascetic spirit encroaching on the one side, and heathenish immoralities and irregularities overflowing on the other.

*Passion for Legislation.*

However this may be, the same cause that brought the Apostles and Brethren together in conference during the first century, was found equally operative with the Bishops and People of the second. The instinct of self-defence is a sufficient reason in both cases. S. Paul, contending against the rigid views of the Judaizers in Antioch, was strengthened for the battle by the united testimony of the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren in Jerusalem.[9] So, in later times, the Doctor or Disputer, whose painful duty it was to shut the mouths of heretics, had need to be corrected or confirmed, whichever it might be, by the deliberate judgment of the great body of his Brethren.

*Councils Apostolic.*

But when, as sometimes happened, Councils themselves became parties in controversy, a remedy could be found only in waiting for the action of larger, more general, and more impartial Synods. Such was the case with the long continued strife about the Asiatic Pascha. In this case, Italian and other Councils were opposed to Asiatic. The same difficulty was experienced in the baptismal contro-

*Synods against Synods.*

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[8] See Apostolic Constitutions and Canons; also, Canons of early African Synods, in Münter's *Primordia Eccl. Afric.*

[9] Acts, xv. It is pleasing to notice in the latest Synods of this period that the Apostolic precedent was still closely followed; that Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and People were all present. What share the People had in the proceedings is not easy to determine. Bishops, at that period, being in part chosen by the People, and being from the nature of their office in constant intercourse with them, were eminently representatives of what may be called the lay-sense of the Church. Few cases occurred, therefore, in which the sentiments of the Bishops and of the People materially differed. Whenever an opposition party existed, it found its main strength among the Clergy. See Pusey, *Councils of the Church*, Oxf. 1857.

versy. But even in such cases, the habit of looking from individual, local, or sectional disputants to the great body of the Brethren, and of awaiting their decision, had undoubtedly a sobering and liberalizing effect; so that differences which in any other society would have led to grievous schisms, were in the case of Catholics kept in charitable suspension, till finally the times were ripe for a settlement satifactory to all. In this way it happened, that the great Council of Nice had questions up before it which had been mooted for two centuries or more. Its decisions were the complement of the decisions of many preceding Synods.

*Sobering Influence.*

In short, that new aspect of Church life which marks the latter half of the second century, was a necessary and wholesome adaptation to altered circumstances. The Church, in her conflict with the great Serpent, had to be led into the wilderness, as it were. Amid new and searching trials, she was to become conscious of new strength.

*New Times, New Strength.*

From lack of appreciation of this fact, the history of primitive Christianity has been much misunderstood. On the one hand, virtues have been attributed to this period with a rhetorical profusion unwarranted by facts. On the other hand, every change or imagined change has been regarded as a corruption. But, in sober truth, there is no portion of Church history which has not vices enough in it to shock a sensitive mind, or virtues enough, if looked for, to command its admiration. The real proof of an age is, how it meets its own trials, and accomplishes its own work. To judge aright, therefore, of the complex and often painful details of the period we are now approaching, not only the varied character of the conflict from within and from without, but the infinite importance of the interests at stake, and above all, the mingled earnestness and frivolity of an age equally profligate and enlightened, must be taken into the account and kept charitably in view.

*An Age judged by its Trials.*

## CHAPTER IX.

### S. IRENÆUS AND HIS DISCIPLES.

WITH the exception of two distinguished Africans, Minucius Felix the Apologist, and Tertullian the father of Latin theology, all the leading champions of the Faith, at the end of the second century and the beginning of the third, were Greek in extraction, language, and intellectual habits. Of these, S. Irenæus was in the West the most prominent example.

*Leading Champions.*

Brought up from early childhood under the eye of Polycarp, Pothinus, Papias, and other disciples of S. John, he was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of that devout and thoughtful school. But he was an eager inquirer also into all the learning of his age.[1] So far as can be judged from the few fragments that remain of the Greek original, his style is not devoid of elegance and good taste. But the rich and expressive imagery of the Scriptures, and the fresh world of thought which had come in with Christianity, no longer admitted of strict adherence to classic models. To hold the new wine of the Gospel, new bottles must be made. The zest with which the early Fathers studied the sacred writings; their profound and lively faith in the divine Spirit that breathed through them; the loving ingenuity with which they made all parts alike profitable for instruction; their luminous method of quoting; and above all, the extraordinary aptness, abundance, and diversity of their citations, were creating a new literature quite different from the classic, and requiring to be judged by an entirely different rule. Irenæus was one of the most discreet

*S. Irenæus,*
A.D. 120–202.

*New Wine. New Bottles.*

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[1] Tertull. *Advers. Valent.* 5.

of the first laborers in this field. His wonderful knowledge of the Scriptures, however, was a knowledge of the heart even more than of the head; and his interpretations, if judged by modern canons, are liable to the charge of occasional extravagance.

*Blemishes.*

He had, in fact, the faults as well as merits of his school. Seeing Christ in everything, and delighting more in the application than in the critical interpretation of the Scriptures, he was yet in some points a literalist to a dangerous extent. From Papias he inherited the Millenarian doctrine. Like Justin, he regarded the sons of God mentioned in Genesis[2] as angelic beings. He believed the story of the miraculous agreement and plenary inspiration of the authors of the Septuagint version, as also the singular notion that the Hebrew Scriptures had perished before the days of Ezra, who was miraculously enabled to reproduce them. Fancies of this kind he took at second hand, relying upon the authority of such men as Papias, or upon the credit of apocryphal productions.[3] For his opinion that our Lord was forty years of age at the time of His crucifixion, he gives the authority of S. Polycarp and other hearers of S. John; which, as the ancient mind remembered numbers chiefly by symbolical association, was probably a mere slip of memory. With a few blemishes of this kind, all of them more or less traceable to private and apocryphal traditions, the extant works of S. Irenæus[4] are among the most valuable of the remains of the first three centuries.

*Traditions.*

*Irenæus Bishop.*

At what time he removed from Asia Minor to Lyons has not been definitely ascertained. It is only known that at the period of the Lyonnese persecution he was a distinguished Presbyter of that Church; and was intrusted by the martyrs then in prison with the letter which they wrote to Eleutherus of Rome, for the promotion of peace among the Churches: in testimony, that is, against the formidable novelty of the heresy of Montanus. After the death of Ponthinus he became Bishop, and had a certain primacy over the Gallic Churches.[5] Of his labors and influence in that extensive field, little is told us beyond the fact that he sent missions to Besançon and Valence; and became, in general, the teacher and enlightener of the Celtic nation.

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[2] Gen. vi. 2.

[3] Such as the IVth Book of Esdras; for the sayings of Papias and other *seniores apud Irenæum*, see Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. i.

[4] S. Irenæi Episc. Lugdunensis et Martyr. *Contra Hæreses*, etc. D. R. Massuet, Paris, MDCCX.; Beaven's *Life and Times of S. Irenæus;* Tillemont, *Memoires*, etc., tom. iii.; and the five *Books against Heresies*, edited by Harvey, Cambr. 1857.

A.D. 178.

His cares, however, were not confined to his own province. Connected with Asia Minor by birth and education, and interested in the affairs of the Roman Christians by his mission to the imperial city, he was deeply concerned for the growing troubles of Christendom at large, and for those of the Roman Church in particular. For the Metropolis at this period was not a little distracted by internal feuds. One Blastus, an Asiatic and a Presbyter, was forming a party in the Judaizing direction, and made a point of celebrating the Pascha on the fourteenth day of the month. Whether he ran into formal schism is not quite clear. So also one Florinus, a Roman Presbyter, alarmed at the bias that existed among speculative minds towards the heresy of two principles, maintained the doctrine of the divine *monarchy* in a way which seemed to make God the author of evil. Irenæus argued and remonstrated with both of these. Both were Asiatics by birth; and Florinus, in particular, he could appeal to by their joint remembrance of the saintly Polycarp. It shows the manifold temptations of the times, and the facility with which men glide from one heresy to another, that Florinus, when driven from his monarchian position, took refuge in the Valentinian theory; finding the source of all evil in *the body* of man, or in the material world, and making it to have dropped, as it were, from the carelessness of one of the lower æons.

*Troubles in Rome.*

*Blastus and Florinus.*

The pursuit of error into this new labyrinth was felt by Irenæus to be a difficult and perilous undertaking. In proportion as charity required him to apply the knife or the caustic to the tumid errors that preyed upon the Church, the same charity demanded that it should be done with tenderness to the patient, and with a thorough understanding of the exact nature of the disease.[6] In argument with heretics, every word must be weighed, every logical consequence diligently explored. Hence the solemn adjuration, with which his treatise on *the Ogdoad* concludes; and for calling attention to which we have to thank Eusebius, as it lets us not into the mind merely, but into the very heart of a high-toned, charitable, and conscientious orthodoxy. "I adjure," says he, "the transcriber of this book by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by His glorious appearing when He comes to judge the quick and dead, that thou carefully compare and correct thy transcript by this very copy, and that thou transcribe this adjuration and set it in thy copy." A book against heretics was intended to be a chart to save souls from shipwreck;[7] it must be a work, therefore, of the most scrupulous accuracy.

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[5] Euseb. v. 23.

*Caution of Irenæus.*

*His Adjuration.*

Once engaged in the study and refutation of Gnostic heresies, Irenæus had many reasons for perseverance in his task. One Marcus, a disciple of Valentinus, had given a popular form to the æon-system of his master, and was disseminating it widely among the cities of the Rhone. He was able, by some sort of legerdemain, to convert the wine of the Sacrament into blood. By this and similar arts, he attached to himself a flock of silly women, wealthy and of high rank, whom he drugged or otherwise induced into an ecstatic state, similar to that witnessed among the Phrygian prophetesses. Religions of this kind, combining the popular *spiritualism* of the day with certain elements of the Gospel, were formidable rivals of Christianity in the affections of the people. Those who embraced such systems were "spiritual souls"; those who rejected them were "psychical" or "carnal." But as spiritual souls, from

*The Marcosians.*

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[6] S. Iren. lib. iii. c. 46.

[7] S. Iren. lib. iv. For an interesting collection of *Diræ et Adjurationes Libris Additæ*, see Fabricius, *Bibliothec. Græc.* lib. v. cap. i.

the Valentinian point of view, were incapable of evil or of contamination by evil; and as Marcus among other things pretended to confer a miraculous gift of invisibility: the descent from high-wrought religious enthusiasm to the lowest sensuality was rendered particularly easy. Irenæus saw, in the vile practices of these Marcosians, a legitimate development of Gnostic and Valentinian principles. To the study of these principles, therefore, and to their exposure and refutation, he devoted a large portion of his time for many years. The part he bore in the Paschal controversy was highly honorable, and worthy of a disciple of S. Polycarp.

*Their Vile Practices.*

*Paschal Question.*

As already noticed in this chapter, there was a faction at Rome, of which one Blastus seems to have been chief in the times of Eleutherus, that availed themselves of the difference of custom between Rome and Asia Minor as a handle of sedition. It is probable that there were many Asiatic Christians in the imperial city. For some time, according to the charitable understanding which existed between Polycarp and Anicetus, these seem to have been allowed to follow the custom of their own country, ending the fast before the Pascha on the fourteenth day of Nisan, instead of waiting for the ensuing Sunday. Such differences would be a matter of little moment, so long as there existed no other causes of dissension. But when a seditious spirit became almost a chronic evil, and especially when a Judaizing bias began to show itself, any peculiarity, however unimportant, could be converted into a rallying point for schism, or at least of disaffection. This began to be the case with the Easter controversy. The successors of Anicetus could not let the question stand where he had left it. Soter seems to have found it necessary to insist upon conformity to the Roman practice, on the part of those Asiatics, at least, who were residents in Rome. The question, the meanwhile, was becoming more complicated. The Laodicean Christians, not content to break the fast at the same time with the Jews, had, it would seem, adopted the further custom of eating a paschal lamb on the

A.D. 176.

A.D 163.

*Becomes more complex*

occasion.[8] It was under these circumstances that Victor, being provoked without doubt by the increase of the factious spirit before-mentioned, and appealing to a desire very generally entertained, initiated a movement towards uniformity of practice in all parts of the world. He wrote to the various Churches, and among others to those of Asia Minor. He was determined, he declared, that *the Church should have nothing in common with the Jews.* The movement excited a warm interest in all quarters. Many Councils were held, and innumerable letters were written. Most of the Churches, especially those of Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Corinth, Osrhoëne, Pontus, Italy, and Gaul, decreed that the fast of the Holy Week was not to be broken till Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection. On the strength of this general consent, Victor wrote to the Asiatics in a more decided tone, threatening them with excommunication if they held out any longer. But the Quartodecimans, as they were called, headed by Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, a gray-haired veteran of "slender frame" but mighty spirit, whose family had furnished eight prelates to the Church, unanimously refused to depart from their tradition. Victor proceeded to carry out his threat. In this, however, his brother Bishops generally declined to go with him. On the contrary, they rebuked him with much severity; and exhorted him to return to unity and love.

A.D. 196.

*Victor and the Asiatics.*

Irenæus, in particular, while he followed the common custom in preference to that in which he had been bred, was urgent in his remonstrances against Victor's course; and wrote to him and to many other distinguished prelates. From his protest on this occasion we learn that there still existed no little diversity, both as to the time and as to the manner of fasting; some observing one day, some two, some more,

*Irenæus Counsels Peace.*

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[8] This, however, is hardly more than a plausible conjecture, founded on slight intimations in Euseb. iv. 26, and in the *Chronicon Paschale.* See Gieseler, § 53 (Smith's ed.), n. 34–36. The question whether our Lord ate the paschal lamb on the fourteenth day, or by anticipation on the thirteenth, is amply discussed in Dr. Jarvis's *Introduction*, part ii. ch. vii.

before the Easter Feast, and some again fasting forty hours consecutively. This diversity in small matters, Irenæus justly adds, made the unanimity of the Church in more essential things only the more conspicuous.[9]

*His Death.*

Irenæus died, as some say a martyr, when the Church of Lyons was a second time devastated, in the persecution under Severus about the beginning of the third century.

*Church Growth.*

*Miracles.*

The witness of Irenæus on that most interesting subject, the spread of Christianity in his day, is extremely vague; but we may gather from it, that not only among the Gauls, but among the Germans on the West of the Rhine, the Gospel was successfully preached. His declaration that it was still attended with miraculous demonstrations is somewhat injured by his mentioning no particular example, and by his confining himself to the general statement that such things frequently occurred. He is careful to add, however, that the dæmons when exorcised returned no more; that many relieved from them became good Christians; and that when such acts of mercy were performed, it was done simply by prayer, in the Name of Jesus, without any juggling ceremonial; and in no case would any sort of gift or recompense be accepted. The seriousness with which he dwells on details of this kind is sufficient proof of his own convictions on the subject, but hardly enough to satisfy the demands of modern criticism.[10] It is not improbable, however, that the "gifts" lingered longer on the outskirts of Christianity in the missionary field, than in regions where the Church was fully established.

*Disciples of Irenæus.*

The light which Irenæus shed upon the West during the latter part of the second century was transmitted to the first half of the third by two of his disciples: Caius, a learned Presbyter, and perhaps an Evangelist or Bishop at large, and Hippolytus, still more distinguished as the austere and philosophic prelate of Porto, near Rome.

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[9] For a judicious account of this and similar diversities, see Socrates, *Eccles. Hist.* v. 22; also Sozomen, vii. 19. This latter gives quite a list of peculiarities.

[10] This point is more fully considered in Book III. ch. 8.

*Caius,* A.D. 201-219.

Of the former, little remains to warrant the esteem in which he was held by the ancients. He wrote against Proculus, a Montanistic teacher, about the time of Zephyrinus, Bishop of Rome, and was an opponent of the Millenarian doctrine, which he ascribes to the heretic Cerinthus.[11]

*Hippolytus,* A.D. 198-236.

*Hostility to the Roman Bishops.*

*Pastors and Doctors.*

Hippolytus,[12] recently brought into prominent notice by the discovery of his "Philosophoumena," or "Refutation of all Heresies," is almost the embodiment of an interesting phase in early Church history; having been an earnest controversialist, the leader of an opposition party in Rome, and a rigorous censor of the laxity of his times. As Bishop of the Portus Romanus, one of the most important of the six Sees in the immediate neighborhood of the city, he was a prominent and perhaps leading member of that band of suburban prelates called at a later period *cardinales episcopi*, which took the lead in the Roman Presbytery. At all events, he appears as a chief and somewhat dreaded counsellor of the Bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus. To both these he was hostile on theological and disciplinary grounds; accusing them of Patripassianism in doctrine, and of serious innovations in the conduct of Church affairs. His testimony on this subject is highly interesting, as showing the difficulties that involved the leading Bishops in those times. On the one side beset by austere theorizers, rigid in their notions of discipline and keen in doctrinal disputation, and on the other having to maintain the Faith against plausible and subtle speculations of the most opposite descriptions, they were obliged to be somewhat slow and even vacillating in their judgment of the movements of the day. As a general rule, the Bishops of the great Sees, and more especially of Rome, were men of practical and administrative talent, rather than of learning and theological acumen. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that they were not always on good terms with their more scholarly advisers;

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[11] Euseb. ii. 25; iii. 28–31.

[12] S. Hippolyti, Episc. et Mart. *Refutat. Omn. Hæresium*, lib. ix.; Bunsen's *Hippolytus*.

and that the tendency to philosophize on the one side, and perhaps to temporize on the other, should break out occasionally into mutual distrust.

As to Hippolytus, he undoubtedly theorized as far as safety would permit. In his dread of the patripassian error, he taught a kind of *subordination* of the Son to the Father, which gave a handle for the charge of *Ditheism*, or a doctrine of two Gods.[13] The charitable construction, which enables us to acquit him of actual heresy in this direction, may be applied with equal force, perhaps, to the alleged opposite leaning of the party of Callistus.[14] The same reasoning applies to his invectives on the relaxation of discipline in the Church. His own notions on the subject were austere and impracticable, suited only to a community of philosophers or monks. His denunciations, therefore, are valuable, as showing the complexity of the questions which the Clergy had to solve, and the bitterness of feeling that necessarily arose, rather than for any very clear light they shed upon the character or principles of the dominant influence in Rome.

*His Position extreme.*

The peculiar severity of tone, which induces some to suspect him of a leaning towards the Montanists, or to rank him with the Novatians of the latter half of the century, he had in common with the philosophic class to which he belonged. Like his master Irenæus, he favored Chiliasm. Like most of the learned teachers of his times, he made Gnostic views a matter of particular attention, and traced all errors to one or other of the heathen philosophic schools.

*His Severity.*

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[13] His *Veritatis Doctrina*, however, a fine philosophic version of the Creed, addressed to Greeks, Egyptians, Chaldeans, and all mankind, is enough to vindicate his substantial orthodoxy. In it, the distinction between things generated and created is sharply drawn. So also the divinity of the Son. *Refutat. Omn. Hæres.* lib. x. 32, et ss.

[14] The doctrine of Callistus, as stated by Hippolytus, is undoubtedly heretical; being the same substantially as that ascribed to Noëtus. Besides which, the heretical sect of the *Callistians* seem to have got their name from him.

It is said that before his death he repented of the violence of his conduct, and exhorted his followers to strive for peace. He suffered martyrdom, probably in Rome, during the persecution of Maximin the Thracian.

*His Death.*

## CHAPTER X.

### THE ALEXANDRINE SCHOOL.

In the constitution of the Episcopate of Alexandria there seems to have been some departure from the general practice of the Church, the exact nature of which, however, it is not easy to determine. The amplest account of the peculiarity is given by Eutychius, a Patriarch of Alexandria in the tenth century.[1]

*Episcopate.*

"S. Mark," it is said, "along with Ananias ordained twelve Presbyters, to remain with the Patriarch; so that, when the chair should become vacant, *they might elect one out of the twelve,* on whose head the other eleven should lay their hands, give him benediction, and constitute him Patriarch. This continued at Alexandria till the time of the Patriarch Alexander (A.D. 325) . . . who forbade the Presbyters in future to ordain their Patriarch, but decreed that on a vacancy of the See the neighboring Bishops should convene for the purpose of filling it with a proper Patriarch, *whether elected from those Presbyters, or from any others.*" Eutychius adds, that during the time of the first ten Patriarchs, there were no Bishops in the rest of Egyyt; Demetrius, the eleventh, having been the first to consecrate them.

*According to Eutychius.*

S. Jerome gives substantially the same account; except that he makes no mention of *ordination* by the eleven, and says the change of custom occurred in the times of Heraclas and Dionysius.[2]

*According to S. Jerome.*

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[1] See Neale's *Holy East. Ch.* Book I. § 1.

[2] *Epistol ad. Evangelum.*

*One Explanation.*

In the silence of contemporaries on the subject,[3] and from the vagueness as well as lateness of the testimony given, there is room for the conjecture that Egypt, instead of being divided among several local sees, was governed for awhile by a college of twelve chief pastors residing in Alexandria; the Bishop of that See being at their head. Nothing could be more natural than such an arrangement, at the first planting of the Church. In later times, however, as the Gospel extended into the Provinces, it would be found inconvenient, and each important city would desire a resident Bishop of its own. This is the most natural inference, if the language of Eutychius be taken to the letter. For the Presbyters mentioned by him were manifestly Presbyters who had power to ordain; but Presbyters[4] with power to ordain are the same as Bishops, in the restricted sense of the word. As S. Jerome says, in connection with this subject, "What does a Bishop do, *except ordination*, which a Presbyter cannot do?"

*Another Explanation.*

This is said, on the supposition that the eleven both elected and ordained their Patriarch. But as that point is not certain, resting only on the testimony of a writer manifestly inaccurate in language and living six centuries after the period of which he speaks, the peculiarity of the Church of Alexandria may have been merely that of electing a Bishop out of a close corporation of twelve Presbyters, instead of choosing from the Church at large, as was customary in other places.

However that may be, the See of Alexandria was undoubtedly a chief centre of Church life, its influence extending by the end of the third century over a hundred dioceses in Egypt, Pentapolis, and Libya. Till the time of Demetrius, however, little is known of its history beyond a list of names. He, it is said, was both a layman and a married man at the time of his election, and totally illiterate. But, addressing himself zealously to the duties of his office, he became by diligent study one of the most learned prelates of his time; and it was during his episcopate that Alexandria, by the brilliant efforts of its philosophic teachers on the one hand, and by the sterling orthodoxy of its clergy on the other, took a decided lead in that work of intellectual progress for which, as we have seen, the period had begun to be distinguished.

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[3] It is fatal to the theory of any radical, or even marked, change in the Church government of Egypt, that the period in question is covered by the names of Origen, Meletius, and others, who belonged to an *opposition party*, and who certainly would have made themselves heard, if the ruling party had been guilty of any innovations.

[4] It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the term Presbyter, like the term Priest, or Sacerdos, was often used as a name for the Ministry in general, and therefore might be applied to any order. 2 John, 1; 3 John, 1; 1 Peter, v. 1.

*Demetrius Bishop,* A.D. 189.

Considering the character and position of the city, it could hardly have been otherwise. To Greek and Hebrew alike,[5] Alexandria was the seat of philosophy and learning. It was the congenial home of Gnostic and Platonic dreams; the centre of a liberal and spiritual, though mystic, Judaism. Heathen myths and Scripture verities, by a process of allegorizing fanciful in some respects, but not without a tincture of earnest religious feeling, had been blended, as it were, in a richly colored though bewildering and deceptive light. In the first century, Philo the learned Jew had flourished there. Towards the end of the second century, Ammonius Saccas, who had been a Christian and was more or less imbued with elements of Christian truth, opened a fresh vein of thought in the new Platonic system.[6] Plotinus and others followed in his steps. The school thus founded claimed

*Centre of Learning.*

*Judaic and New Platonic Wisdom.*

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[5] The Alexandrine Jews figure largely in that course of Providential preparation, so wonderfully ordered, by which the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles was secretly undermined, and the way was opened for the spread of the Gospel. The translation of the Old Testament into Greek was one part of their work: the development of a liberal interpretation was another. In this latter point Philo Judæus, born about twenty years before the Christian era, was a valuable instrument. His works are accessible to the English reader in Bohn's *Eccl. Library.*

[6] Ritter's *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Book XIII.; Euseb. vi. 19.

to be a Religion as well as a Philosophy.[7] It pretended to intuitions of truth, or immediate revelations. It admitted a place for Christ as among the greatest of teachers and theurgists. On the same principle it did not reject, but spiritualized and so labored to justify, the fables of the Greek polytheism. It even endeavored to find a reasonable and religious basis for the generally reprobated but much practised arts of magic and divination.

*Pantænus,* A.D. 130.

*Mission to India.*

It was amid such influences that the Catechetical School,[8] founded by S. Mark and carried forward, it is said, by the labors of Athenagorus,[9] attained its first celebrity under the auspices of the famous "Sicilian bee," the eclectic philosopher Pantænus. Of him, however, little but his distinguished reputation has descended to our times. A deputation from some part of India having come to Demetrius, desiring him to send thither a teacher of Christian truth, Pantænus was deemed worthy of the mission, and departed to that country. There he found some traces of the labors of S. Bartholomew the Apostle, with a Hebrew copy of the Gospel of S. Matthew. He afterwards returned to the School at Alexandria, in the conduct of which he was succeeded by his better known disciple, S. Clement.

*Catechetical School.*

To realize the position of this latter, it is necessary to remember that the Catechetical School was an institution intended rather for those without, than for those within the Church. In its simplest form, S. Paul dwelling at Rome in his own hired house, receiving all who came, preaching the Kingdom of God, and speaking of things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ—or the same Apostle disputing daily at Ephesus in the school of one Tyrannus—presents, on the whole, a just conception of it. The same may be said of Justin Martyr, who, when he lived at Rome, was always to be found in his own quarters at the Baths of Timotheus, ready to give instruction. In the form it subsequently assumed, we see less of the Gospel preacher, more of the philosophic talker. A Christian man of science, whether of the Laity or Clergy, held himself in readiness to discourse upon all subjects connected with religion: to remove difficulties, to answer questions, to resolve doubts, to prepare the heathen mind, in short, for an intelligent reception of the Gospel. While the School, therefore, dealt with high and sacred themes, it had all the range and freedom peculiar to lay-teaching. Its analogy, in modern times, is to be found in the relation of the press to the pulpit; or rather, it may be said, of the University to the Church.

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[7] See chap. vi. of this Book.

[8] Guericke, *De Schola, quæ olim Alexandr. floruit, Catechetica.*

[9] Originally an Athenian philosopher. He wrote an *Intercession* for the Christians about A.D. 177, in which he defends them against the charges of atheism, cannibalism, and incest. Like most of the philosophic theologians, his notions on many subjects were harsh and impracticable.

*Lay Teaching.*

Clement, a convert from heathenism and a man of encyclopædic learning, who had travelled in all countries, studied in all schools, and profited by all systems—an eclectic "bee" that sucked honey from every flower, but found the substance of their sweets in "prophetic and apostolic meadows"—was particularly well fitted by nature and education to carry out this idea. His mission was to the refined and cultivated heathen. Not merely to turn them from idolatry by *Hortatory Appeals*; but *to conduct them* affably and pleasantly, with moral discourses on the way, *to the school* of divine knowledge; to hang that school, as it were, with embroidered *Tapestry-work*:[10] to array Religion in the many-colored robes of a literature and philosophy intellectually attractive—seems to have been the object he had constantly in view. Hence, though belonging to the priesthood, he mixed up philosophy and religion to an extent that exposed him to

*Clement, 189–202.*

*His Mission.*

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[10] Such seems to be the idea of his three works, which "rise each upon the other in a series or sequence,"—in imitation, perhaps, of the three degrees of knowledge required by the ancient mystagogues, the *Logos Protrepticos*, the *Pædagogos*, the *Stromata*. In this paragraph I have rather adapted, than translated, some of the innumerable types and tropes, with which in the opening of the *Stromata*, the cause of eclectic philosophy is defended.

*The Enclosed and Unenclosed Garden.*

*The True Gnostic.*

*Christan Culture.*

much blame. His tabernacle of Christian gnosis was too lavishly adorned with "the spoils of the Egyptians." Israel, indeed, might be the enclosed garden of the Lord, a sacred repository of choice and healing plants. But the great Gentile world was his unenclosed garden. The same Hand created both. The same Spirit breathed in both. The same Divine Word had shed His light on both. Yet, as flowers and weeds, grapes and thorns, figs and thistles, had all grown promiscuously in the Gentile soil, the barren or pernicious concealing the fruitful tree from the mere casual observer: it followed that the genuine Christian *Gnostic* must be above all things an Eclectic. His spiritual taste must be educated. He must be accustomed to prove all things, that he may hold fast to what is good. Clement, in short, saw no incompatibility between profane and sacred learning. The former was, in some sense, the handmaid of the latter—perhaps a necessary handmaid. For, as Sarah the mistress was barren, till she had borne a son to Abraham by Hagar, her maid; so the Church, relying on simple faith and abhorring the profane touch of dialectic, philosophic, and scientific culture, might find herself in the position of one who expects to gather grapes, without being at the pains to cultivate the vine.[11]

*Clement's Errors.*

With views so perilously in advance of the religious sentiment of his times, and which anticipated the broadest modern schemes of liberal education, it is not to be wondered at that Clement's orthodoxy has been, and is still, an open question. That he sometimes used inaccurate expressions with regard to the essentials of the Faith, and that in less important points he advanced many erroneous opinions, is beyond all doubt.[12] On the breaking out of the Severian persecution he retired before the storm, and defended his course in this particular with arguments full of good sense, but somewhat too elaborate and ingenious. He has been much censured for his advocacy of the *pseudos*, a species of "reserve" or "white lie," in dealing with unbelievers. As a general rule, those who advocate reserve are the least given to it in practice. Clement was hardly an exception to this rule. The "lies" he had in view were that "economy" which dispenses meats and medicines in due measure and due season, and not any such deception as the word taken to the letter might imply.[13] In his system, however, human wisdom undoubtedly had too high a place; and his pretensions to a *gnosis* or secret knowledge, unattainable to the vulgar, savored too much of the arrogance of the Gnostic and new Platonic schools.

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[11] Even the physical sciences are included in Clement's curriculum. *Stromat.* lib. i.

[12] Bishop Bull defends his substantial orthodoxy. Among the notions imputed to him by Photius, who had a copy (perhaps a corrupted one) of his *Hypotyposes*, now lost, was the theory of several successive creations before Adam. Was this an anticipation of modern geology? See Tillemont, tom.

*His Pseudos.*

He was succeeded by Origen,[14] the Adamantine, the man of iron soul, whose mind was, as the name *Chalkenteros*[15] suggests, a great thought-factory—a marvel of rapid, easy, steady, and vigorous operation. He dictated to seven amanuenses, and is said to have been the author of at least six thousand different works. He wrote more, says S. Jerome, than another man could read. As the demand for thoughtful tracts must have been in some proportion to the supply, there could be no stronger testimony to the wonderful intellectual activity

*Origen, A.D. 203.*

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iii. art. 5. For an exact account of his teaching, see Kaye's *Clement of Alexandria* (John, Bishop of Lincoln), and Clementis Alex. *Op. omnia Gr. et Lat. ed.* Potter, Oxon. 1715.

[13] See Blunt's *Right Use of the Early Fathers.* While Clement's *meaning* may be defended, his language, it must be confessed, might be made to countenance almost any amount of fraud undertaken with a pious end in view. The same is to be said of some of the expressions of Origen. See notes to Gieseler, § 63.

[14] On the subject of Origen, Eusebius is very full. *Eccles. Hist.* See also Huet's *Origeniana*, and various other disquisitions, appended or prefixed to De la Rue's edition; Origen, *Op. Omn.*, etc., Paris. 1733. For a list of works on Origen, see Fabricii, *Bibliothec. Græc.* tom. vii. and Walch, *Bibliothec. Patristic.* p. 273.

[15] S. Jerome so calls him.

of the times. In his life he was a strict ascetic. Going barefoot at all seasons, owning but one coat, a vegetarian in his diet, and content with such sleep as he could obtain on a bare floor, he devoted his days to teaching, his nights to prayer and study of the Scriptures. He was but eighteen years of age when he began this course. The persecution, before which Clement retired, gave him occupation of a still more honorable kind. Many of his disciples were among the Martyrs and Confessors. He visited them in prison, he stood by them before the tribunal, he comforted and encouraged them in the final conflict. It was unfortunate for him, and for his subsequent good name, that with such unquestionable zeal and self-devotion there was something of the alloy of a presumptuous hardihood. Though still a mere youth when appointed by Demetrius to the Catechetical School, he seems to have taken counsel only of his own heart. Acting, for example, on what he afterwards acknowledged to be a hasty interpretation of the language of our Lord with regard to eunuchs,[16] he prepared many sorrows for himself, many scandals and disturbances for the Church at large. He urged, by way of apology for this act, that there were several females in his school—which exposed him to scandal and temptation. Both the act and the excuse show an undue influence of the encratite spirit so prevalent at that time.

*His Devotion and Heroism.*

*Self-will.*

In such matters, Origen is the less excusable, in that he was a child of many prayers, and of a careful Christian nurture. One of the tenderest images of all antiquity is that of his father, Leonides, rebuking the precocity of his gifted boy, but stealing to his couch when he slept, that he

*His Father Leonides.*

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[16] Matt. xix. 12. By his ill-advised act, Origen, according to a wise canon of the Church (see Apostol. Canons, 21–24), disqualified himself for entering Holy Orders. It may be noticed here that bodily blemishes were not made a bar to Holy Orders (Apostolic Canons, 77) unless they were self-inflicted. A deaf or blind man, however, could not be made Bishop—"not as if he was by this made unclean, but lest it be an impediment to him in the duties of his office."

might kiss a breast so manifestly a temple of the Holy Ghost. This excellent father was one of the first victims of the Severian persecution. Origen would gladly have shared his martyrdom; but his mother kept him at home by hiding away his clothes. He managed, nevertheless, to encourage his father by an admirable epistle; in which, referring to his mother and seven children about to be left destitute,[17] he said: "Father, be firm in the Faith, and be not troubled on account of us."

*A Martyr.*

One of the beneficial influences of that mixture of religious and secular teaching which characterized the Alexandrine School, remarkably appeared in the case of Basilides, one of Origen's disciples, but still a heathen and an officer in the army. It fell to him, in the course of the persecution, to conduct the famous Potamiæna to her execution. This noble virgin, equally celebrated for her beauty and her virtue, when all other appeals had failed to daunt her courage, was threatened with the horrible fate of being given over to the will of the brutal gladiators. To escape this outrage, she uttered some word deemed sacrilegious by the crowd, which brought upon her the penalty of immediate death. Basilides led her away, but showed his sympathy by protecting her from the insults and abuses of the mob. She promised him her prayers, as a reward for his humanity. Not long after her martyrdom, Basilides declared himself a Christian; and relating to the Brethren how Potamiæna had appeared to him three successive nights, in a dream, and had placed a crown upon his head, he was duly received, baptized, and shortly after enrolled in the army of the Martyrs. With Potamiæna suffered her

*Potamiæna and other Martyrs.*

*Basilides*

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[17] Origen was left in straitened circumstances; but in later life he found a fast friend in Ambrosius, a wealthy layman, whom he reclaimed from the Valentinian heresy, who not only supplied his moderate wants in the way of meat and clothing, but furnished him the means of carrying on his stupendous intellectual labors. During the persecution under Maximin (A.D. 235), he had occasion to exhort this noble friend to martyrdom: a wife and children, and large property, being, as he urged, only a greater reason for courage and steadfastness in the faith.

mother Macella. The baptism of fire that they received was imparted also to Herais, a female catechumen, another of Origen's disciples. The number of young women of high character who appreciated the teachings of this great master,[18] and many of whom were employed as copyists of his works, is creditable to the state of Christian society at that period.

*Origen's Gift and Labors.*

*His Renown*

Of Origen's innumerable intellectual labors it is sufficient to say here that they were in the direction pointed out by his able predecessors. A disciple of Pantænus and of Clement, a willing hearer of Ammonius Saccas, and full of genius, industry, and hardy independence, he could not fail to exert a prodigious influence upon the young mind of his times. His fame was known in the palace, and he corresponded, it is said, with the Emperor Philip. Mammæa, the mother of Alexander Severus, received lessons in Christianity from his mouth. An Arabian prince paid him a special visit for the same purpose. He was an object of admiration, also, to the heathen philosophers.[19] On one occasion, at Rome, when he chanced to enter a hall where Plotinus the celebrated Neo-Platonist was lecturing, the latter rose from his seat and declined proceeding before one who, as he declared, knew more than he could tell him.[20] But his most enduring fame, and, as Gregory Thaumaturgus[21] says, his "greatest gift," was in the sphere of "an interpreter of the word of God." He searched with indefatigable zeal for the *mystical*, the *moral*, and the *historic* sense of Scripture;[22] and in each of these departments was sometimes hurried by his ardor into dangerous extremes. By carefully distinguishing, however, the three senses from one another, he did as much for the cause of grammatical interpretation as for the allegorizing method so popular among the ancients. Enough remains of his labors to justify to posterity the esteem in which he was held. But his Hexapla, a polyglott Bible in six columns, containing the original text in Hebrew and Greek characters, with the four Greek versions of the Seventy, of Aquila, of Symmachus, and of Theodotion, is, with the exception of a few fragments, unfortunately lost.

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[18] The lectures of Plotinus also, the famous Neo-Platonist were attended by many female disciples. See Porphyr. *Vita. Plotin.*

[19] Porphyry's eulogy is quoted by Eusebius, vi. 19.

[20] Porphyr. *Vit. Plotin.* This, however, may have been another Origen, a heathen philosopher, who was also a disciple of Ammonius.

[21] Who composed an *Oratio Panegyrica in Origenem*, highly esteemed for its glowing eloquence.

[22] Practically only *two* senses; for the *mystic* sense was considered unattainable or only partially attainable to man, in the body: "even the simplest believers know that there are (profound meanings under the letter of Scripture), but *what they are* men of modesty and good sense confess them-

*The Hexapla.*

Demetrius, the earnest and sober-minded Pastor of the Alexandrine Church, during whose episcopate this brilliant constellation of teachers appeared in the theological heavens, must have watched its rise and culmination with no little interest, and, perhaps, not without a shade of serious misgiving. However that may be, he for a long time acted with a liberality seldom witnessed in such circumstances among men of his character and position. Why he

*Origen and Demetrius.*

selves ignorant." Origen cites particularly the story of Lot and his daughters, Abraham and his two wives, the two sisters that Jacob married, the arrangement of the tabernacle, etc., etc.; in which he says, every one can see *some* type or figure, though he who imagines he has found the absolute and fixed meaning is apt to be mistaken. The *three* senses were in reference to the common notion of the threefoldness of man: the *body* (literal or historic sense)—the *soul* (moral sense)—the *spirit* (mystic sense). In some parts of SS. only one, in some two, and in some the three senses may be found. The most objectionable part of Origen's interpretation was, that, in his eagerness to show the necessity of the allegorizing process, he *made* many difficulties in Scripture which do not exist. The cases in which the mystic interpretation is allowable, according to Origen, are: (1) the various details of the ceremonial laws; (2) all that is said about Jerusalem, Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, and other type-cities or type-names; (3) when the letter of Scripture is seemingly trivial, self-contradictory, or (like the Song of Solomon) capable of perversion and misinterpretation. On the *perspective* character of the language of the Old Testament, see Lee, on *Inspiration*, etc., Lect. iii. See also Peter Daniel Huet's *Origeniana*. Gieseler, *Ch. Hist.* § 63, gives Origen full credit for his services to grammatical interpretation. So also Neander, *Ch. Hist.* § v.

at length departed from this course has been variously conjectured. Some ascribe it to envy of Origen's growing reputation.[23] Such motives are easy to impute, and to some minds easy to believe. They are difficult to prove, however, even with the advantage of personal or contemporaneous knowledge. Without entering, therefore, into questions of this kind, it is enough to notice the fact, that Origen's latter days were clouded by a bitter contention with his Bishop, and with the Church of his native city.

*Beginning of the Quarrel* A.D. 215,

*Origen Condemned*, A.D. 231, 232.

The quarrel began during a visit of Origen to Palestine, where, on the invitation of Alexander of Jerusalem, one of his disciples, and Theoctistus of Cæsarea, he preached in the churches of those prelates. Demetrius remonstrated against this, and Origen was summoned home. About thirteen years after, being invited into Greece, to assist in the refutation of certain heresies which had there obtained a footing, he procured letters commendatory from Demetrius and repaired to that country. Thence, under the sanction of the same letters, he passed into Palestine, where, without consultation or further communication with his Bishop, he was ordained to the priesthood. Demetrius objected to this as a violation of the canons. An angry correspondence followed. The Catechist was refractory; the Bishop uncompromising. The former was defended by the clergy of Palestine. The latter, supported by two councils of the Alexandrine Church, issued a sentence of deposition and excommunication against Origen, on the ground of his false teachings and violations of the canons; an act in which the Roman Church concurred, though Palestine, Arabia, Phenicia, and Achaia strenuously opposed it. Undeterred by this, Origen continued his stupendous labors in Cæsarea, in Greece, in Arabia, where he confuted and converted the heretic Beryllus, and in other places, with great acceptance and great usefulness to his numerous admirers. Afterwards, under the episcopate of Dionysius, the sentence against him seems to have been remitted, or at least forgotten.[24] He was finally a confessor in the Decian persecution,[25] and died shortly after in the city of Tyre.

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[23] Eusebius, in his extreme partiality for Origen and the Palestine Bishops, is manifestly harsh in his judgment of Demetrius. Many modern writers, though aware that such acts and opinions as those of Origen would have condemned him in the eyes of any Christian body that ever existed, are equally severe upon the action of the Alexandrine Church.

Apart from the personalities involved in this controversy, there is much meaning in the course pursued by the Church of Alexandria at so critical a period. On the surface, it may have been a mere quarrel between two leading Churchmen. At bottom, it was one important phase of a conflict ever going on between the conservative instinct and the spirit of progress.[26] Origen was a Philosopher, Demetrius a Pastor. The former was large-minded and theoretic, the latter was practical and perhaps narrow-minded. Both of these classes have their uses in the world, but it seldom happens that they thoroughly and cordially understand one another. In the times of Origen, especially, the philosopher's cloak was still a novelty in the Church, and in the eyes of sober shepherds had much of the wolf-skin about it. Demetrius, doubtless, was open to misgivings on this score. So long, however, as Origen taught merely in the character of a religious and philosophic layman, the prudent Bishop might very properly refrain from any hasty interference. In the same way, so long as Origen did not seek to be admitted to the priesthood, there was no occasion for any public censure of the injudicious act by which he had become canonically disqualified for the office. But it was a different case when his conduct and his teaching were to be authorized, as it were, by the seal of Holy

*Meaning of the Quarrel.*

*Reason for it.*

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[24] See Huet's *Origeniana*, lib. i. iii. 10.

[25] Book III. ch. 3.

[26] Neander says, "The outward cause of the controversy was the hierarchical jealousy of Demetrius; but the real ground lay deeper, and outward circumstances only served to bring that hidden cause into public notice, which was the *contrariety* between Origen's Gnostic tendency and the anti-Gnostic." *Hist. of Christian Dogmas.*

Orders. Then it became a matter of indispensable necessity to look more closely into the character of the influence he was so widely and powerfully exerting.

*Heresy arrested.*

Accordingly this was done. Many of his views were righteously condemned.[27] The Alexandrine School was arrested in a course,[28] which, without some such check, might have made it a mere nest of heretical speculations.

*Influence in other Quarters.*

On the other hand, in the Churches of Palestine, where Origen was so warmly encouraged, the way was opened for habits of mind which led in the fourth century to Arian sympathies. His successors in the Catechetical School were Heraclas and Dionysius, both in course of time Bishops of Alexandria; and, towards the end of the century, Pierius and Theognostus. Theodorus, afterwards called Gregory the Wonder-worker, Bishop of Neocæsarea in Pontus; his brother Athenodorus; Pamphilus, a learned Presbyter of Cæsarea in Palestine, whose name was adopted by Eusebius, the Church historian; Firmilianus, the distinguished and able Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; and Julius Africanus, one of the earliest of Christian chronographers, were among his disciples or intimate friends. The character of such men is an argument in favor of the essential soundness of their teacher. It is a better argument, however, for the general soundness and conservative and restraining influence of the common-sense of the Church. Origen, in fact, both in his faults and in his merits, was considerably in advance of the times in which he lived. Opposition to his teachings was precipitated somewhat by his imprudences of conduct. Yet it hardly began fairly till the end of the third century, when Methodius, Bishop of Tyre, an eloquent but not very judicious writer,[29] opened a controversy that has continued at intervals to be revived with more or less bitterness, down to the present day.

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[27] It has nothing to do with our judgment of Origen's orthodoxy, but deservedly weighs much in our estimate of his Christian character, that he was singularly modest in the expression of his views. For this he is much praised by Huet and others.

[28] As it was, Clement and Origen helped to give a spiritualistic tone to Alexandrine Theology. This was shown (1) in freedom of speculation (against, or beyond Scripture) on such subjects as an endless series of worlds, final salvation or at least salvability of the damned, ethereal character of the risen body, etc., etc.; (2) in the emphasis laid on the doctrine of the Logos, and in dangerous theories in relation to that doctrine; (3) in placing all virtue and perfection in *gnosis*, a sort of dispassionate contemplation; (4) in affirming intellectual sins to be worse than moral, etc. The Chiliast, and other sensuous heresies, founded on a too close following of the letter of the Scriptures, were little favored in Alexandria. See Neander, *History of Church Dogmas*, and Gieseler, *Church History*, § 63. As Origen's mind was many-sided, his writings also contributed to the rationalistic bias which afterwards showed itself in Palestine and Syria.

*In advance of the Age.*

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[29] He was a martyr in the Dioclesian persecution, A.D. 311. His principal work is a eulogium on Virginity, in dialogue form, entitled "Banquet of Ten Virgins," some fragments of which remain in Epiphanius and Photius. Eusebius (possibly out of partiality for Origen) makes no mention of him.

# BOOK III.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCHES

AND

## FIRST TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY.

A.D. 200–324.

# Book III.

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## CHAPTER I.

### NORTH AFRICAN CHURCH.

*North Africa.*

THE African Church, a name not including Egypt, Cyrene, or any of the dependencies of the See of Alexandria, had in the course of the second century extended the influence of the Gospel over two of the three great provinces of Northern Africa.[1] Its territorial limits embraced ultimately Africa Proconsularis, Numidia, and Mauritania. In these were some three thousand towns and villages, with a mixed population of Romans, Greeks, Jews, and Africans both of Punic and indigenous race.

*Character of the People.*

It was a vast and fertile region, rich in commercial and agricultural resources, stocked with innumerable slaves,[2] and haunted at the commencement of the Christian era by a prolific brood of abominable superstitions. In this respect it was, even more than Rome or Alexandria, a sink of the whole world.[3] Each race which had settled in the country had brought in with it its own peculiar rites; and each imported rite the prurient imagination of Africa had invested with new horrors. Human victims were sacrificed to Baal, under the Roman name of Saturn. Maidens were devoted, *Superstitions.* amid lewd songs and games and lascivious rites, to the *Vesta Meretricum,* the Syrian Astarte. Magical rites, divination, necromancy, fetish-worship, had of course grown apace in so rank a soil. Nor were the morals of the people better than their religion. Cruelty, treachery, and lust were national characteristics. A fanatical self-devotion, blood-thirsty, gloomy, insatiable in its greed for horrors, swayed the soul alternately with a frivolity hardly more human. So that, notwithstanding the strong bridle of Roman law, and the so-called civilizing influences of baths, theatres, and temples, the Cross, it is likely, was never set up on more unpromising ground.

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[1] Münteri, *Primordia Eccles. African.* See also Schelstrate, *Eccles. Afric.;* and Morcelli, *Africa Christiana.*

[2] Apuleius mentions that there were four hundred slaves on *a portion* of his wife's property. Apuleii, *Apolog.* p. 333. Elmenh.

[3] In Afris pene omnibus, nescio quid non malum . . . *inhumani* . . . *ebriosi* . . . *fallacissimi* . . . *fraudulentissimi* . . . *cupidissimi* . . . *perfidissimi* . . . quis nescit, Africam totam obscœnis libidinum tædis semper

Who the first Evangelists were, and whence they came, is a question involved in no little obscurity. There is a confused tradition of Pentecostal voices, sounding their glad *When Evangelized.* tidings along the coast, or even in the interior; and a vague rumor connects this early preaching with the names of Simon of Cyrene, Simon Zelotes, or, as some would have it, Simon Peter himself. Such traditions in themselves are of little value. It is not improbable, however, that some straggling rays of the great Pentecostal light had visited the Jews in this, as in all other parts of the Roman world; and a few believers, gathered as in other places from among them or their proselytes, may have formed a connecting link between Africa and the *matrix religionis,* the Mother Church at Jerusalem.

However this may be, the African Church could lay no claim *Church established.* to a strictly Apostolic origin. The Carthaginian fleet that sailed annually to Rome with a supply of corn, returned some time about the beginning of the second century

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arsisse? non ut terram ac sedem hominum, sed ut Ætnam putes impudicarum fuisse flammarum, etc., etc. Salvian. *De Provident.* lib. vii. For much more to the same effect, see that very satisfactory book, Morcelli, *Afric. Christian.*

with a more precious freight; and Roman missionaries established an Episcopal See at Carthage.

*Its Special Interest.*

As the African Church was thus among the latest to begin its course, Carthage being almost the only important See to which the phrase *sine charta et atramento*[4] could not be applied: so its career was in many respects the most rapid and most brilliant. It gave to the world a Tertullian, a Cyprian, and an Augustine, the three principal teachers of Western Christianity; and among minor writers, Minucius Felix, Arnobius, and Lactantius. A still greater interest attaches to its history from the fact that the ante-Nicene period covers both its rise and the commencement of its decline. For though it afterwards continued to exist, and to exert a certain influence till the time of the Mohammedan invasion, yet its latter years, oppressed by a foreign yoke and embittered by barbarous dissensions, exhibited little more than the melancholy symptoms of a slow but inevitable decay. This Church, then, as being not a planting merely, but as it were a ripened fruit of the first age of Christianity, seems to merit a larger space in this section of our history than can be accorded to others, whose importance, though eventually much greater, was of somewhat later date.

*Its Growth.*

A.D. 215.

Of its growth during the second century little is positively known. About the end of that period it comes suddenly into light: strong in faith, as witnessed by the martyrdom of the Scillitans in the Severian persecution; strong in numbers and organization, for at a council holden in Carthage, under Agrippinus, the Primate of North Africa, as many as seventy Bishops were present, representing the two Provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Numidia. It was in this Council that all baptisms administered by heretics were declared invalid. A little later the same stand was taken by many Churches in the East, especially in the great Council of Iconium.

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[4] The phrase is applied by S. Irenæus to barbarous nations, which had to receive the Truth orally, before they could be taught to read the Scriptures. Carthage received the Truth and the Scriptures simultaneously; which may account for the disposition among the Africans to use Scripture and tradition as synonymous terms. It also explains why, when looking for customs or traditions not contained in Scripture, they turned to Rome, as *auctoritas præsto*—a witness close at hand.

A.D. 230.

*Scillitan Martyrs,* A.D. 202.

The Scillitan martyrs were among the first who suffered for the Faith in North Africa. To the simplicity of their religion, which they pleaded and labored to commend to the Proconsul Saturninus, he opposed what he regarded as a still more simple creed.[5] "Swear," says he, "by the genius of the Emperor." He seems to have been somewhat anxious to save them, if he could, from the extreme penalty of the law; and offered them for this purpose a respite of thirty days. The Scillitans, however, knew no path but the straight one. "Honor," they said, "they were always ready to give to the Emperor: but honor with prayer belonged to God only." They were sent back to prison to reconsider their resolve. But firm against the threats and deaf to the suggestions of the good-natured magistrate, twelve persons in all, nine men and three women, were beheaded; giving thanks to God for His grace in allowing them to be enrolled in the glorious army of His martyrs. The kind of punishment inflicted in this case is an indication that the Scillitan witnesses, and perhaps the majority of believers in that region, belonged to the Latin part of the North African population.

*Heathen Cruelties.*

The persecution of the Christians, though commenced under a certain show of law, soon fell into the hands of an excited populace, and was marked by all the usual features of diabolical cruelty and malice. The Christians were accused of incredible abominations. Their assemblies were represented to be the scenes of such orgies as heathenism unhappily had made familiar to men's minds, though in a purer state of society they could hardly have been imagined. The punishments were in keeping with the imputed crimes. By a refinement of barbarism, not unknown elsewhere, but which seems to have originated in Africa, Christian virgins, whom the cry *ad leones* could not daunt, were condemned to the vile service of the infamous *lenones.*[6] Such outrages were naturally regarded as signs of Antichrist. It is not to be wondered at that they engendered in some minds a gloomy, or at all events visionary, temper, alien to the spirit of sober and true religion.

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[5] *Acta Proconsularia Martyrum Scillitanorum;* Baronius, *Annal. ann.* ccii.; given also in Münteri, *Primordia.*

*Signs of Antichrist.*

Many circumstances conspired to foster such a spirit, both among the Christians and among their idolatrous and savage persecutors. The first blood shed had been followed by floods, tempests, meteors, subterranean thunders, and an extraordinary eclipse of the sun. By portents of this kind a fanatical temper was excited among the heathen, who attributed all calamities to the anger of their gods insulted by the Christians. On the other hand, the common Christian hope of the coming of the Lord was more vivid in times of peril, and sometimes degenerated into a morbid superstition. In a healthy state of mind, believers always prayed for the safety of the Empire, and *pro mora finis :* for a longer continuance, that is, of the world's season of repentance. It was a symptom of a dangerous enthusiasm, when to some, in their confident and exultant expectation of the end, this charitable prayer became unmeaning or distasteful.[7]

*Enthusiasm.*

*Prayer pro Mora Finis.*

From causes of this kind the enthusiasm of Montanus, already rife in many portions of the West, and naturally suited to the sensuous temper of the African and Africo-Roman mind, found in Carthage and its dependencies a soil peculiarly fitted for its reception. This may be seen to some

*Sensuous Bias.*

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[6] Tertullian mentions such a case in the last chapter of his *Apologet.* Cyprian alludes to it as a custom: "Virgines, venientis Antichristi minas, et corruptelas, et *lupinaria*, non timentes." *De Mortal.* In the later persecutions such cases became quite common.

[7] Montanistic Tertullian, *e.g.*, finds fault with some, because "*protractum quendam sæculo postulant*, cum regnum Dei, quod ut adveniat oramus, ad consummationem sæculi tendat." *De Orat.* 5. See also that fearful outburst so often cited against the early Church (*De Spectaculis*, c. 30), "Quale spectaculum," etc.

extent, even in that noble sample of the records of martyrdom, the Passion of S. Felicitas and S. Perpetua.

Perpetua, a young matron of high social advantages, about twenty years of age at the time when she was called to suffer for the testimony of Christ, had an infant at her breast.

*Perpetua.*

She was obliged to withstand, moreover, the passionate threats and entreaties of a doting father. She pointed the latter, with a somewhat provoking calmness, to a pitcher in the cell. "Father," she asked, "what do you call that vessel?" "A pitcher," he replied. "But can you say that it is not a pitcher?" "Of course," said he, "I can not." "Then it is equally impossible for me to say that I am not a Christian." The old man left her in a fit of impotent rage and frenzy. At another time, when he came in "to cast her down," and in tears addressed her "not as daughter but as lady," she was deeply grieved because of his gray hairs, and "because he was the only one of her family that did not rejoice at her affliction;" and she comforted him, saying: "Nothing can happen at the tribunal, but what God wills; for know that we are not in our own power, but in the hand of God." He withdrew from her, however, overwhelmed with sorrow.

*Trials.*

*Grief of her Father.*

A few days after the first interview, the prisoners were baptized. On that occasion Perpetua was inspired to ask nothing of God but the grace of bodily endurance. Still, the gloom and stifling heat of the jail were almost insupportable; and she was pining with anxiety for her half-famished babe. The Deacons managed to get them a few hours of recreation out of doors. The infant was allowed to stay in prison with its mother. When she was relieved of this subject of anxiety, "the prison immediately became to her a Pretorian palace; so that she would rather have been there than in any other place."

*Baptism in Jail.*

Felicitas, a slave, was great with child. As the law forbade one in this condition to be put to death, she was dreadfully afraid that she might not be allowed to share the martyrdom of her companions. But she was delivered in prison

*Felicitas.*

before her time, and was thenceforth full of joy. As she had exhibited anything but fortitude when taken with the pains of travail, one of the jailors said to her: "If you make such an ado now, what will become of you, I pray, when thrown to the wild beasts?" She answered: "It is I who suffer now; at that time Another shall be in me, who will suffer for me, as I for Him." Some good-hearted Christian woman adopted the little innocent thus brought into the world.

*Dreams and Visions.*

The captives found favor with their jailors, and were visited by crowds of sympathizing friends. Blessed Deacons ministered to their wants. Doctors deemed it an honor to fall down at their feet. They were cheered, moreover, by ecstasies and visions. The celestial ladder, with a great dragon at its foot, and bristling on either side with swords and knives and hooks, led Perpetua to a garden, wherein sat the good Shepherd milking his ewes. Myriads robed in white were standing in shining robes about Him. "Welcome, child," was His address to Perpetua, as He gave her a bit of cheese.[8] She received the gift with joined hands; the bystanders responded with a loud "Amen;" by all which she understood that the end was rapidly approaching, and cheerfully put aside all thoughts of the present life. In another dream, Dinocrates, her young brother, who had perished of a cancer at the age of nine years, was delivered by her prayers[9] from the place of torment where she saw him.

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[8] This seems to indicate a sympathy with some of the Montanist notions. See Gieseler, § 59, note 9. The peculiarity of the *Artotyrites*, who attached a mystic meaning to bread and cheese, may have existed before a sect was formed on those peculiarities.

[9] On the efficacy of prayers for the dead, there were not precise notions, even among the more learned Christians. Among ordinary believers, it is likely, there were very loose views. The only prayers of the kind ordinarily sanctioned, however, were *pro dormitione; e. g.*, "A wife," according to Tertullian, should "pray for the soul of her deceased husband, that the twain may be reunited at the first resurrection (the millennium), and that in the meantime he may have *refrigerium*"—a quiet and refreshing rest: *ad Uxor.* See Abp. Usher, *Ans. to Chall. of a Jesuit*, c. 7.

In other visions the disorders of the times were unsparingly rebuked. The loquacity of the Africans, gathering noisily around their Bishop, was compared to the wrangling of a crowd of heathen just coming out of the circus. The day before the execution, the prisoners were allowed a *free banquet;* an indulgence usually granted to persons condemned to death. They availed themselves of the opportunity, to celebrate the Agape or feast of love. The crowd, who gathered around from motives of curiosity, were commanded to take good note of the features of the victims, that they might be sure to recognize them at the Day of Judgment. Some were exasperated at these appeals. Upon others the evident sincerity of the confessors was not without effect.

*Rebukes.*

When the final conflict came, the better feelings of the crowd so far prevailed as to spare the martyrs the profanation of appearing in the robes of Ceres and of Saturn, which it had been intended they should wear. "To preserve our liberty," said Perpetua, "we freely give our lives. See ye to it that the bargain be not broken." The populace admitted the justice of the appeal. In a less commendable spirit, some of the male confessors addressed the spectators, and especially Hilarian, the Proconsul, with threatening looks and gestures; for which they were ordered to be scourged. But it added to their joy, that their sufferings were thus made to conform more nearly to the Passion of the Lord. Finally, each underwent the death he had had the grace to pray for. Saturninus, according to a desire he had more than once expressed, was exposed to the fury of all the wild beasts. Saturus had a particular horror of a bear, and the bear to which he was thrown refused to come near him. He was at last attacked by a leopard; and as the blood gushed out, the populace shouted in derision of the Christian belief in the efficacy of martyrdom, *Salvum lotum, salvum lotum:* he who was thus *baptized* being regarded as sure of his own salvation. The women, in consequence perhaps of the popular exasperation which the men had somewhat needlessly provoked, were di-

*Final Conflict.*

*Answer to Prayer.*

*Salvum Lotum.*

vested of all their clothing, and hung up in nets to be tossed by wild cows. But at the sight of them in this condition, the crowd once more relented. They were allowed to clothe themselves. Perpetua, surviving the first attack of the infuriated animal, was conscious enough to draw her robe over the parts of her person exposed, and to bind up her hair; but seemed otherwise as one just awaking from a dream. When told what she had suffered, she said to her brother and to a certain catechumen: "Stand fast in the faith, love one another, and be not offended at what we endure." With the others who had survived the fury of the beasts, she was finally despatched with the sword. The rest received the fatal stroke in silence. Perpetua was woman enough to shriek as the weapon pierced her side; but, immediately recovering, guided the hand of the trembling gladiator to a more mortal spot. Perhaps, adds the notary, the unclean spirit was afraid of her; and, without her own consent, so noble a lady could not have been put to death.

*Death of Perpetua.*

The beautiful narrative[10] from which these incidents are gleaned, was written in part by Perpetua herself; the preface and conclusion being added by a coarser hand. Some touches in it betray, as has been said, a Montanistic bias. That the writer of the preface sympathized with the new Prophets, there can be no question. "The Spirit," he observes, "was not poured forth upon early times only. The older the world is, the more novel and the more startling the demonstrations of His power. And in the latest times of all, the more manifestly must appear the truth of the prediction that the young men shall see visions and the old shall dream dreams." That these "latest times of all" were actually appearing, was a common and natural feeling amid the horrors of persecution. Hence an eagerness for martyrdom, passing the bounds of sobriety. Hence a fondness for ecstasies and visions, and an austerity of temper which sometimes

*Montanist Bias.*

*Fondness for Visions.*

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[10] *Passio SS. Perpetuæ et Felicitatis atque Sociorum;* given in Münter's *Primordia Ecc. Af.*

clouded, without obscuring altogether, the simplicity and reality of the martyr's faith.

*Tertullian, nat.* A.D. 135, *ob.* A.D. 217.

It was probably about this time that Tertullian,[11] himself an epitome of the African religious mind, conceiving a great disgust at the laxity and worldliness which he had witnessed among the Roman and other Christians, boldly took the part of the "spirituals," as they called themselves, against the easier and more indulgent views of the "carnal" Catholics.

*Question of Veils.*

There was a question, for example, as to the propriety of virgins being seen unveiled. The majority of the Church were content to let "custom" decide in matters of this kind. The stricter party were disposed to condemn the custom as scandalous and indecent, a sin against nature and the law of God. For awhile, the question was agitated without any serious breach of peace. At length, however, the contest day by day becoming more bitter, the unveiled virgins, or "virgins of men," as they were called, began to be "offended" at "the virgins of God," and the latter, perhaps, were scandalized in turn; so that things were tending fast to an open rupture.[12]

*Question of the Crown.*

Or, to take another instance, a Christian soldier had on a certain holiday declined to wear the chaplet, usually worn on such occasions in honor of the Emperor.[13] The Spirituals approved. The more compliant Catholics regarded the man as scrupulous to excess, and even blamed him for exposing his brethren to needless persecution. Tertullian threw himself eagerly into these and similar quarrels of the day. A Roman by blood, a lawyer by education, but African and atrabillious in his temper; full of genius, moreover, intensely sensuous and realistic, more eager than reverential in his passionate devotion to the Truth, yet deeply, and at times tenderly, solicitous for the souls of men: he had seen much in Rome and Carthage to put him out of temper with the Christianity of the day, and to make him look habitually on the dark side of things. To idealize the past into a sort of golden age, needs only a vivid imagination, or a feeble sense of facts. To see good in the present is a much harder task. It requires a supernatural gift of charity and patience. But in this virtue of patience, Tertullian, as he more than once acknowledged, was particularly deficient. It must be confessed, however, that by the end of the second century there were already facts in Christianity which good and earnest men found difficult to digest.

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[11] Qu. Septimius Florens Tertullianus; on this subject, see Kaye's *Tertullian;* Neander's *Antignosticus;* and Tertullian. *Op.*, etc. Nic. Rigalt. 1689.

[12] Tertull. *De Veland. Virgin.* 2, 3.

[13] *De Corona;* in which tract Tertullian advocates unwritten tradition almost as heartily as in the tract *De Veland. Virginibus,* he inveighs against it. In the one case custom was on his side, in the other not. See Hagenbach, *Hist. of Doc.* ᾒ 34 (Buch's tr.).

*Past and Present.*

The old landmarks betwixt the Church and the world were undergoing a gradual but visible removal. The believer and the infidel had, in the innocent customs of society[14]—in dress, in fashion, in amusements, in social freedom—an amount of common ground which was every day enlarging, and which, by a convenient distinction between precepts of obligation and counsels of perfection, might admit of such an extension as to make Christian and heathen ethics substantially the same. In morals, as in doctrine, the Apostolic ship was much covered by the waves; the Apostolic net had many rents in it. This decline was rebuked, but not remedied, by the followers of Montanus. These and other ascetics, by appropriating the term *spiritual* to themselves, and the term *psychical* or *carnal* to the mass of their Christian brethren, had caused both to be regarded as mere party words. And when religious phrases come thus to be perverted into shib-

*Decline of Discipline.*

*Party Names.*

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[14] At this period converts were made in great numbers among the wealthy middle class. In Alexandria, especially, Clement (*Pædagogus*) found it necessary to inveigh against dresses, jewels, trinkets of every sort, rare birds, monkeys, lap-dogs, and other luxuries that defrauded orphans and widows of their just support.

boleths of party, their authority over the conscience is in a great measure lost.

*Spirituals and Psychics.*

Tertullian, however, was too earnest a man to join in the ridicule which the inflated pretensions of the Spirituals had drawn upon them. He saw in them the advocates of a return to stricter ways. Their lives comparad favorably with the somewhat frivolous behavior tolerated among Catholics. They seemed to be reformers. And their wonderful success—for the influence of Montanism had spread with a rapidity that seemed to rival the first effusion of Pentecostal light—gave plausibility to the claim of a special demonstration of spiritual power.

*Tertullian's party,* A.D. 201.

Under these circumstances, persuaded by Proculus, a Montanistic leader, and influenced by the favor shown in Rome to Praxeas the Patripassian, Tertullian undertook, as he expresses it, *the defence of the Paraclete, and so became separated from the Psychics*, or Catholics. But it was not in his nature to be a mere follower in a sect. The heartiness and boldness which estranged him from one party, made him in time a separatist from the other. He and his co-religionists in North Africa, became, in fact, Tertullianists rather than Montanists. The congregation lingered, though gradually diminishing in numbers, till the times of S. Augustine;[15] when, at last, "the few who remained came back into the Church, and transferred their Basilica to the care of the Catholics."

*His Position.*

How Tertullian and his party were regarded by the orthodox of Carthage is not quite clear. He was condemned in Rome; he was anathematized, perhaps, by one of the Carthaginian Councils.[16] Still, a kindly feeling seems to have subsisted between him and the great body of the Church. His followers also experienced some indulgence. Fasting strictly and frequently, abhorring second marriages, insisting more than others upon clerical celibacy, shunning the fashions and amusements, and so far as possible the business of the world, looking with scornful pity upon the compliances and evasions of a carnal Catholicism, and fortifying themselves in all this by dreams, ecstasies, and visions, with a lively hope of the speedy manifestation of the heavenly Jerusalem, they had too strong a hold upon the sympathies of believers to be easily or suddenly separated from them. In the course of time, however, they became more sour; and it was from the bitter root of Phrygian enthusiasm that sprang some of the wildest errors of North African religion.

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[15] S. Augustin. *Ad Quodvultdeum. Hæres.* 86.

[16] A sentence in his tract, *De Pudicit.*—"ecclesia quidem delicta donabit, sed ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non *ecclesia numerus episcoporum*"—is generally supposed to have been aimed at some Council that had condemned him.

*His Influence.*

But in the meanwhile, Tertullian had gained a place in the affections of all parties, from which no anathema has been able to dislodge him. *Fuit in ecclesia magna tentatio*, says Vincent of Lerins: his position in the Church was indeed a great trial. By his plastic genius, and ready and rough vigor, he almost created the religious language of the West. He was a mighty champion for the Faith, against the subtle rationalism of Praxeas whom he forced to retract his errors, and against the Gnostic views of Marcion, Hermogenes, Apelles, and other disturbers of the times. He is the exponent of that mighty struggle against sin, that deep and earnest sense of the necessity of grace, that intense realism and individualism in matters of religion, which has remained characteristic of the Western mind. His unquestionable services to the cause of orthodoxy, and still more to the cause of religious earnestness,[17] were no doubt appreciated by the

*Religious Earnestness.*

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[17] Tertullian's mind was thoroughly anti-gnostic, and his bias diametrically opposite to that of the Alexandrine doctors. His conceptions were sensuous in the extreme. Thus among his paradoxes he maintained that *God is corporeal*—being unable to conceive that anything without body could exist (which, however, was probably nothing more than a rough way of asserting the personality of God); that *Christ* (when He appeared to the Patriarchs) and *the Angels* were *clothed in flesh;* that *souls are propagated* with the body *ex traduce*, and are themselves corporeal; that *wicked souls become demons after death*, etc. From the same turn of mind he conceived of the grace of bap-

mass of his countrymen; and atoned in their eyes, as they have atoned in the eyes of posterity, for a multitude of philosophic and theologic errors.

*The Church stronger than the Schools.*

But it happened with this great master, as with the equally great Origen in the East, that the Church spirit of his times proved stronger than the influence of any individual spirit. The disciples of Tertullian, and especially S. Cyprian and S. Augustine, appreciated his merits without following him in his errors.[18] He exerted an influence upon the doctrinal development of his day, but he did not control it.

*A Season of Peace,* A.D. 211.

With the death of Severus, the persecution in Africa, as elsewhere, ceased. An interval of forty years of peace, occasionally interrupted by temporary outbreaks, allowed the good seed and the bad to grow up together. The Church extended itself into the remoter Province of Mauritania. Councils were held, some of them attended by as many as ninety Bishops; in one of which Privatus, probably a Bishop, was condemned for some heresy unknown.

*Sects.*

For the rest, Gnostic or Montanistic sects, unmolested so far as we can learn by a succession of indulgent and not very able Bishops, contended for the right of women to teach; or endeavored to make sense of the incoherent utterances of the ecstatic prophetesses; or, in the picturesque language of the times, killed the fish of Christ by forbidding them

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tism as lodged in *the water,* to which he ascribed a sort of magical operation—the water being, as it were, transubstantiated. Expressions of this kind scattered over his works are capable of a charitable and orthodox interpretation; but they show, none the less, the peculiarity of his mind. (It would be easy to show that the same bias has pervaded and still pervades the Western mind generally.) His practical turn is seen in a mere enumeration of his writings—about *shows, idolatry, marriage, prayer, baptism, female apparel, veils, crowns, fasts,* etc., etc. In treating all such matters, he took the austere side, but was as sensuous *against* abuses as others were *for* them. See Neander's *Antignosticus.* For Tertullian's paradoxes, see *Essay of Pamel.* prefixed to his Works.

[18] They partook not a little, however, of his peculiar bias.

the water; or used water instead of wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; or cultivated peculiarities of posture and of gesture; or railed, as occasion served, against Bishops and other rulers.[19] On the whole, there seems to have been much of mutual forbearance. The Canons passed in Councils were directed mainly against the encroachments of a worldly spirit. That Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, were not to engage in secular affairs; that the sons of clergymen were not to marry among infidels or heretics; that no one should be ordained till he had made Catholic Christians of his own household; that virgins, deprived of their natural guardians, should be committed to the care of grave elderly females: these, and similar laws, show the drift of the legislation and of the temptations of the times. Of other matters, beyond occasional names, added probably through popular violence to the roll of Martyrs, so little record remains, that until the reign of the Emperor Decius and the troubled episcopate of S. Cyprian, the thread of African Church history becomes almost invisible.

*Spirit of the World.*

*Drift of Church Laws.*

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[19] Of the *Aquarians*, *Quintillians*, *Artotyrites*, and other absurd sects, little beyond the name is known. It is probable enough, however, that as the Montanists and Gnostics became more and more divided, they departed further from the customs of the Church; so that the decree of the council under Agrippinus, requiring converts from them to be *baptized*, was a necessary precaution; the rite being either neglected, or improperly performed.

# CHAPTER II.

## CARTHAGE AND S. CYPRIAN.

*Cyprian Bishop,* A.D. 248.

WHEN Cyprian,[1] a convert from heathenism, and a man of wealth, education, and high social standing, rose by rapid steps from the grade of a catechumen to that of the Episcopate of Carthage and the Primacy[2] of North Africa, he found the Church, from causes already alluded to, in a state of considerable disorder.

*State of the Church.*

A factious spirit extensively prevailed, and scandals were rife among Laity and Clergy. The Virgins and Confessors—regarded more and more as the flower of Christianity, and treated for that reason with a perilous indulgence—were not a little crazed by the flattery, which even the Bishops, when they ventured to reprove them, could not prudently withhold.

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[1] At his baptism he adopted the name Cæcilius in gratitude to an aged Presbyter of that name, who had been instrumental in his conversion; so that his full name reads *Thascius Cæcilius Cyprianus.* His life, or rather, his eulogy, was written by Pontius, his deacon; but his public acts are to be found in a more authentic form in his own spirited writings. See Poole, *Life and Times of S. Cyprian;* S. Cæcil. Cyprian. *Op. Omn.* à Joanne Fello—accedunt *Annales Cyprianici* a Joanne Pearson. et *Dissertationes Cyprianic.* Henric. Dodwell. Amstelodam. 1700. Cypriani, *Op. Genuina*, Goldh. Lips. 1838.

[2] In the days of Agrippinus (A.D. 215), there seems to have been but one primate in North Africa. By the middle of the century there were three, Carthage, however, still holding the first place. The primacies of Numidia and Mauritania were attached to no particular See, but were given to the oldest Bishops. For the powers of the Primate (which were strictly limited), see Münter, *Primord.* ix. 2.

Of the Virgins, some were petulant in behavior and immodest in attire.[3] So far from veiling themselves from the gaze of a profane world according to the strict notions of Tertullian, they seem to have been living almost without rule. They wasted their time; they spent their money capriciously; they dressed and painted to such excess that, "when God looked for the faces of His elect, He saw only the false colors and gewgaws of the Devil." Others of them became notorious as gossips. They were wont to gad about from house to house; and delighted in the wanton merry-makings which African society tolerated and encouraged at marriage feasts. Some preferred the heathen to the Christian rule of decency, and did not scruple to be seen among the unblushing rabble of both sexes that frequented the public baths. Their manners, in short, were not only scandalous, but—from a modern point of view, and without reference to the omnipotence of fashion in determining questions of decorum—they might be thought inconsistent with any sense at all of Christian obligations.

*Bad Conduct of the Virgins.*

The Virgins, in fact, had in very many cases mistaken their calling. Under all the circumstances of the times, it was natural enough that this should be frequently the case. Virginity was not only an honorable state: it was free from care. At a time when households were divided on the subject of religion, and when, owing to the ubiquitous pressure of a filthy, but to young persons fascinating, idolatry,[4] the rearing of children in Christian habits presented difficulties without number:[5] domestic life was often a bitter servitude: marriage involved the gravest perils and temptations;

*Motives to Virginity.*

*Its Perils.*

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[3] S. Cyprian. *De Habitu Virgin.* In this and the following paragraphs I follow S. Cyprian and Tertullian, though the ardent censors of the vices of an age are not always good authority as to the extent of the prevalence of those vices.

[4] S. Augustine, *De Civitat. Dei,* ii. 26, draws a frightful picture of the obscenities of heathen worship.

[5] Hence Tertullian's main objection to infant baptism. Of the *servitude* incident to domestic life in semi-heathen society, the same writer speaks feel-

and celibacy was regarded as not only more safe to the individual, but more fruitful to the Church,[6] than any other condition. It was popular on prudential as well as on enthusiastic grounds. It was sought, therefore, with avidity by some who had no natural fitness for it. But being sought thus, it was in many cases abused. Its freedom from care became an occasion of perilous self-indulgence. Its dignity ministered to vanity and pride. Even its purity was by a strange freak of conscience regarded as an athletic or agonistic virtue, the more perfect in proportion as it challenged or solicited temptation.

*Confessors.*

From similar causes, the insolence of some of the Martyrs or Confessors had become another crying sin of the times.[7] No Bishop or Presbyter, nor, so far as we can learn, any other distinguished person, had so far suffered in North Africa.[8] The victims, therefore, it is probable, were too often of that class which courted persecution.[9] But they were none the less objects of popular and feminine idolatry. Their wounds and stripes were badges of honor. They went in and out as a

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ingly in many places. *Apologet.* 3; *Ad Uxor.* ii. 4, 6. To heathen husbands, the *antelucan* meetings were particularly offensive. Says Apuleius: "Tunc (mulier) spretis atque calcatis divinis numinibus, in vim certæ religionis, mentita sacrilega præsumptione *Dei quem* prædicaret *unicum*, *confictis observationibus vanis*, fallens omnes homines, et miserum maritum decipiens, *matutino mero* et continuo stupro corpus mancipat."

[6] In illis largiter floret ecclesiæ matris gloriosa fœcunditas. S. Cypr. *De Habit. Virgin.*

[7] Tertullian thus indignantly sums up the powers granted by Zephyrinus, Bishop of Rome, to these Confessors: "At tu jam et in Martyres tuos effundis hanc potestatem, ut quisque ex consensione vincula induit, adhuc mollia in novo custodiæ nomine, statim ambiunt mœchi statim adeunt fornicatores, jam preces circumsonant, . . . . et inde communicatores revertuntur," etc. The insolence, tyranny, and presumption, that naturally followed, are fully seen in S. Cyprian's Epistles.

[8] So says Deacon Pontius in his life of S. Cyprian.

[9] The quiet way in which Hippolytus describes the effort of Callistus to recover his credit among the brethren, by making a disturbance in a Jewish synagogue and thus exposing himself to martyrdom, shows that cases of that kind were not uncommon. See chap. iv. of this Book.

privileged class. And as their ranks, even in times of peace, were constantly recruited through the wantonness of the mob and the culpable indifference of the magistrates, they became a sort of irregular third power, having an influence as great as that of the Clergy, without a corresponding sense of responsibility and duty. The evil was increased by the popular belief that martyrdom, or in its degree, Confessorship, was a plenary atonement for every kind of sin.

*Their Influence.*

*Sisters of the Clergy.*

To what extent worse vices obtained among a certain portion of the Clergy, and among that class of devotees, male or female, married or unmarried, who set up their chastity as an idol of vainglory, and took a giddy pleasure in hanging over the pit from which they professed to have escaped, it is needless to inquire: the cases actually mentioned by early writers being few in comparison with the severity of their strictures on the subject.[10] The *subintroductæ,* virgins who lived as sisters with unmarried priests, were a nuisance against which sermons, canons, and anathemas were for a long time ineffectual. In despite of all precautions, the Agape, a most beautiful, but alas! a most vulnerable feature of the early Church system, was accompanied with disorders which even at this period broke out from time to time, and which at length led to intolerable abuses. In Tertullian's day such evils were deeply felt. In S. Cyprian's they had to be deplored *cum summo animi gemitu et dolore.*[11]

*The Agape abused.*

In excesses of this kind there was probably less of intentional hypocrisy than of enthusiastic self-deception. Conscience, like the needle in the compass, is true to its trust only in a certain equilibrium of the soul. In the condition of the early Church, at certain periods, there was much to disturb this even balance, and to bring on a state of mind in which extravagance and absurdity became more or less the test of religious earnestness and reality.

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[10] That the abuse was an obstinate one, however, is shown by the number of canons that had to be framed against it. I, *Carthaginiens.* can. 3; II, can. 17; IV, can. 46; *Nicæn.* can. 3; *Ancyran.* can. 19. See Dodwell, *Dissertat. Cyprian.* iii.

[11] Tertull. *De Jejun. adv. Psychic.* 17; S. Cyprian, *Ep.* vi. Pariss. Tertullian, however, in his Apolog. (39), written when he was still a Catholic, tells a different story. In the one case he looked upon the Church with an Apologist's eye, in the other, with that of a censor: in the one case he considered the general aspect of things, in the other, he was looking at particular defects. The most philosophic as well as the most charitable judgment is that which is made from the former point of view.

*Self-deception.*

It is not improbable, however, that there were those among the Africans whose hypocrisy was of a cooler and more calculating kind. Avarice had its place among the vices of the Clergy. There was much traffic in sacred things. In the strong and wholesome language of the most eminent censor of the times, the serpent, condemned to eat dust and to crawl upon the ground, had dragged many priests with him into the same degradation. Some were entangled in secular affairs. From a cupidity disgraceful to themselves, or from a negligence of their support discreditable to the Church, even Bishops left their Sees, and engaging actively in mercantile pursuits, acquired an ill name as usurers or sharpers.[12] A natural result of all this was that sect feeling and party spirit grew up among the Laity. Church rulers were despised, Church laws set at naught. Mixed marriages were common. Matrons gave themselves to worldly cares and pleasures; and to please their husbands became extravagant in dress and lukewarm in religion. Heathen shows and feasts were frequented with little scruple. Catechumens put off their baptism that they might be the more free to sin. The Church's pensioners, the poor, were grudgingly supported. The pious fervor which good men had really felt, and which hypocrites had found it necessary to feign as a tribute to religion, was beginning to die out; and faith was sinking into a profound and ill-omened slumber.[13]

*Other Vices.*

*Avarice.*

*Worldliness*

*Frivolity.*

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[12] S. Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 6.

[13] Taylor's *Early Christianity* makes a sophistical use of such facts. The Church is charged with vices against which she was contending On this subject Mr. Poole, in his *Life and Times of S. Cyprian*, very properly

Under these circumstances, the election of S. Cyprian to the Episcopate of Carthage, against the vigorous opposition of five leading Presbyters of the city, was a happy instinct on the part of that majority by which he was chosen and almost forced into the office. As his character was well known, it was also a pledge that the evils above mentioned were rather accidents of the times, than things encouraged or tolerated by the spirit of the Church.

*Cyprian elected.*

He was a man remarkably well fitted for the work that lay before him. Converted to Christianity in the prime of life and in the full maturity of his powers, by one of those sudden revolutions in which the passage from darkness to light is like the dropping of thick scales from the eyes, he had no room for reserves or for lingering regrets. By a mighty Hand he had been led forth in haste from the bondage of corruption.[14] He brought with him into the Ministry all the freshness of first love; giving himself wholly to it, and disposing

*His Fitness for his Work.*

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remarks: "What can be more satisfactory proof of the purity of the Christian Church, *as a society*, from any particular vice, than the indignant reprobation of that vice by all who hint at it, and its denunciation by several Councils?" To this it may be added, that some of the worst sins sprang then, as now, from that *abuse* of private judgment or private conscience, which the Church may censure but cannot possibly prevent. Almost all the *Encratites* were persons of a singularly independent turn of mind. If the maxim of S. Ignatius, "Do nothing without the Bishop," had been heeded in all cases, we should never have heard of Origen's insane act, or of such follies as those of the *subintroductæ*.

[14] "So entirely was I immersed in the deadly atmosphere of my former life . . . that I despaired of ever freeing myself, etc. But when the filth of my past sins was washed away by the waters of Baptism, the pure and serene light from above infused itself into my whole spirit; when my second birth of the Spirit had formed in me a new man, all at once what had been doubtful before, became certain; what had been shut was opened; into the darkness light shined; that was easy which before was difficult, and that only difficult which before was impossible; and now I knew that it was the earthly and mortal which had held me in the bondage of sin; but that the Holy Spirit of God had animated me with a new and better nature." *Ad Donatum de Grat. Dei.* Ep. i. Pariss.

of his handsome private property in the same way as he dispensed the revenues of the Church,—namely, as a steward rather than as an owner.[15] He was eminently practical in all his views. With a benevolence which endeared him to the poor, and a remarkable suavity of manner, he had much of the strong clear-headedness, verging on severity, of the old Roman temper,—the masculine good sense of Tertullian,[16] without his brilliant and versatile genius. His saintliness, therefore, was of no artificial or conventional type. It was the consecration of a firm will, manly instincts, magnanimous disposition, and of a mind as politic and sagacious as it was earnest and intrepid, to the special task which the untowardness of the times, and perhaps the negligence of his predecessors, had suffered to accumulate for him.

*His Character.*

And this task was the revival of discipline in the Church. If reform, strictly speaking, had been needed, Cyprian was the man for the work of a reformer. As it was, the shortcomings and excesses of the day were rather the abuse of a good inheritance, than any constitutional or radical disease. There was no lack of wholesome rules. There was no want, if it could only be turned in the right direction, of an earnest and fruitful though undisciplined Christian spirit. To arouse that spirit, to bring it to bear upon the enforcement of the canons, to chasten and direct it, to curb its extravagances without impairing its true strength, was the object, which with singular clearness of perception and tenacity of purpose, S. Cyprian kept before him.

*His Special Mission.*

In looking around for the means of carrying out this purpose, he found the real working power of the Church practically distributed among three classes. There were the Clergy, headed by the Bishop, but considerably impaired in influence by the prevalence of party spirit; the Laity, represented in the North African Church by the *Seniores populi*,[17] a sort of lay-elders, who acted with the Clergy in all matters of discipline and Church business; and lastly, the Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and the like—an irregular semi-clerical third power[18]—the weight of which, however, was generally thrown into the scale of popular opinion. Theoretically, the Bishop was the head of this system. Practically, each class had a voice of undefined potency. *Nothing without the People* was as operative a rule, as *Nothing without the Bishop*. There was, in truth, a practical balance of Church powers which custom had established, but which neither custom nor theory had accurately defined. In the Word and the Sacraments the Clergy were supreme. In the choice and maintenance of the Clergy the People ruled. In matters of discipline both were consulted; both had a voice; and against the express will of either nothing could assume a legal or binding form.[19]

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[15] Pontius says that he gave all his goods to the Church; but as we learn afterwards that his property was confiscated in the Decian persecution, it seems probable that he kept the administration of it in his own hands. Indeed, as Bishop, he could hardly have done otherwise.

[16] Tertullian was his favorite author. When he said "Da mihi magistrum," it was always known what book he meant. With such a master, Cyprian's rapid proficiency in the knowledge of the Scriptures is not so wonderful as (considering his late conversion) it might at first sight appear.

*Working Forces.*

*Balance of Power.*

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[17] Præsident probati quique seniores, honorem istum non pretio sed testimonio adepti. Tertull. *Apol.* c. 39.

[18] Of this third power in the Church, Albaspineus, quoted and confirmed by Schelstrate, speaks thus: "The ancient Church had nothing rare or precious in her gift, that she gave not to Martyrs; so that, while they lacked the ministerial character, they became lay-Bishops, at least in power, and had even more authority and weight than Presbyters or Bishops." In confirmation of which he quotes Tertullian: *Quid ergo? si Episcopus, si Diaconus, si Vidua, si Virgo, si Doctor, si etiam Martyr lapsus a regulâ fuerit:* ubi pluris facere Martyres, quam Episcopos et Presbyteros, atque aliquid supra Episcopum addere videtur. Schelstrate, *Eccles. African.* ii. 4.

[19] Of the many proofs of this, I select two: S. Cyprian, in his 11th Ep., *Fratribus in Plebe Consistentibus*, speaking of the case of the lapsed: "Cum pace nobis omnibus a Domino prius data ad ecclesiam regredi cœperimus, tunc examinabuntur singula *præsentibus et judicantibus* vobis." See same Ep., and the tract, *De Lapsis*, passim. In the *Acta Purgationis Cæciliani* (S. Optati Op. Dupin, p. 169), the following direction is given: Adhibete con-

Cyprian did not attempt a readjustment of this system. He took it as it was, and conscientiously worked with it.

*Cyprian's Policy.*

When it was necessary, therefore, for himself to act, he laid much stress, as was right and natural, upon episcopal prerogative. When he had to work through the popular element, he spake in equally high terms of the dignity and responsibility that lay upon the People. In the same spirit, he magnified true martyrdom, he exalted true virginity; though the Martyrs and Virgins sometimes were but scourges in his side. On the other hand, he disparaged no class; he elevated none at the expense of other classes. The Church to him was a living body composed of many living forces. To enable each force to live and work with freedom,[20] but to bring all at the same time under that strong control, without which freedom and even life is an impossible chimera, was, so far as he had a theory—which, being eminently a man of action, it is probable he had not—the substance of his theory of Ecclesiastical discipline and order.

*All Classes exalted.*

A few instances of his management of particular cases that came before him, may here be mentioned as illustrations of this point.

Rogatian, an aged Bishop, consults him about the case of a

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clericos et *seniores plebis* ecclesiasticos viros, et inquirant diligenter, quæ sint istæ dissensiones.

[20] Mosheim, in his one-sided and disingenuous remarks on this subject, acknowledges that Cyprian "attributes much importance to the clergy and the people," that "he makes the Church to be *superior* to the Bishop,"—which is a mistranslation of Cyprian's words; but contends that "this man of unquestionable excellence and worth . . . *yields to circumstances* when he admits associates in the government of the Church, but *speaks out the sentiments of his heart* when he extols bishops," etc. That is, Mosheim takes half of Cyprian's words as honest, and rejects the other half as mere diplomacy; a process by which any man may be proved to be anything that a hostile critic chooses to make of him. In the same way, Mosheim sees in Cyprian nothing but contradictions and confusion of ideas. But the contradiction is merely, that Cyprian's language continually contradicts Mosheim's interpretation of that language. *Historical Commentaries*, vol. ii. § 24.

contumacious Deacon. Cyprian, in answer, points out the canonical power to degrade the offender; but recommends a further trial of patience and forbearance. Geminius Victor, an ecclesiastic, had violated the canon which forbade dying men to make the clergy executors or guardians.[21] Cyprian caused the canon to be enforced. The only punishment provided for in such cases was the *post-mortem* sentence, that "no oblation should be made for his death; no prayer nor sacrifice for his repose." His name, in other words, was stricken from the diptychs. He was to have no part in that solemn commemoration of the departed, which was one of the marked features of the early Eucharistic Service.[22] An actor, who after baptism continued to teach though not to practise his art, was commanded to desist. It was better, Cyprian reasoned, that one should live on the Church alms or even starve, than earn a livelihood by a scandalous and perilous profession. In numberless such cases Church rulers had to struggle against the encroachments of the spirit of the world. In this struggle they had the canons on their side, and the general sentiment of the Church. But on the other side there were considerations of temporary expediency, which were already beginning to make the canons practically a dead letter.

*Examples.*

*Struggle with the World.*

With regard to the great scandal of the *subintroductæ*, the Bishop was equally decided. "No one can be secure who exposes himself to danger without need: God will save no servant of His from the devil who puts himself gratuitously in the way of the devil's snares." If any professed virgins found themselves unfitted for that

*Virgins bound to Marry rather than give Scandal.*

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[21] In such cases, the Clergy were obliged by the civil law to accept the responsibility, and thus became entangled in secular concerns.

[22] The diptychs were properly the roll of all who, as "citizens of the Heavenly City," had their names written in "the Book of Life." All believers, after their departure, were probably mentioned once in the Eucharistic Service. Afterwards some were excluded by way of discipline. Martyrs became entitled to a perpetual commemcration. This custom, like many other similar practices, had a wholesome operation for awhile, but degenerated into abuses and superstitions. See Dodwell, *Dissertat. Cyprian.* v.

state, they should not hesitate to marry. If they declined this remedy, and persisted in giving scandal, they were to be *capitally* punished. For under the old law, as Cyprian reasoned, such offenders were slain with the carnal sword: now they should be slain with the spiritual sword,—they should be put to death by being put out of the Church. Accordingly, he approved of the sentence of excommunication passed upon a certain Deacon who had offended in this way; a decision in which, as usual in such cases,[23] the Presbyters of Carthage were consulted and concurred.

*Warnings of Judgment.*

*Dreams and Visions.*

But the cause of discipline, with the chastisement of the disorders so prevalent everywhere, was becoming too weighty a task for any earthly prelate. As S. Cyprian had felt from the beginning of his episcopate, and as he had seen, indeed, in visions divinely sent, a time of thorough sifting was nigh at hand. These presentiments of coming judgment, with confident predictions based upon them, were a decided feature of what may be called the inner religious history of the early Church.[24] They are not uncommon in all ages of the world. In S. Cyprian's case, such monitions were allowed no little force in determining his conduct. In proportion, therefore, as he felt the forewarning shadow of a divine judgment upon the Church—"to cauterize her wounds, to purge her humors, to nerve her whole frame"—he was the more earnest in urging upon all her members the necessity of self-judgment.[25]

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[23] "A primordio episcopatus mei statui, nihil sine consilio vestro mea privatim sententia gerere. Sicut honor mutuus poscit, in commune tractabimus." *Epistol.* v. Pariss.

[24] "Sancto Spiritu suggerente, et Domino *per visiones multas et manifestas admonente*"—was the formula of a Carthaginian Council, A.D. 252. These visions were ridiculed by many. As Cyprian says (*Epistol. ad Florentium Pupianum*), "I know that dreams and visions seem frivolous to some; but only to those who would rather believe against the priests than believe with them." On this subject, see Dodwell, *Dissertat. Cyp.* iv.

[25] Origen, about the same time, was predicting persecutions, on the ground that they were *needed*, and from his foreseeing "that the downfall of the State religion" would be considered by many Emperors disastrous to the Empire. See Neander's *Church History*, § i. part ii.

*Eighth Persecution.*

*Decius Emperor,* A.D. 249.

When the expected storm came, it raged more widely, more furiously, and with a more decided effort to exterminate the Church, than any similar event before. The reign of some of the preceding Emperors, and especially of Philip, had given the Church a foretaste of the deceitful sunshine of imperial protection. Philip, stained with many crimes, but with religious feeling enough to make him superstitious, had even desired to have a part in the prayers of the Church; and, it is said, had gone through the form of penance required in such cases.[26] He was supplanted by Decius, who, partly from hatred of a system favored by his predecessors, and partly from a desire to revive the memory of the old Roman glory which he attributed to the favor of the gods, proceeded to a determined and systematic persecution. His edicts to that effect were sent forthwith into all the principal cities.

*Fabianus a Martyr.*

Fabianus, Bishop of Rome, was among the earliest victims. The post he had held was too offensive to the Emperor, and consequently too perilous, for any immediate successor. It remained vacant, therefore, for more than one year.

*Cyprian retires.*

When the imperial edict reached Carthage, a court of inquiry was appointed, consisting of a magistrate and five citizens, and a day was set for Christians to clear themselves by sacrificing to idols. Many availed themselves of the interval thus allowed, and withdrew into the country. Among these was Cyprian himself. Admonished by a dream, and justified by the common interpretation of our Lord's direction for such cases,[27] he hid himself from the tempest and awaited other times. He was proscribed by the magistrates, and his goods confiscated. From his place of retreat, however, he kept a watchful eye upon Church affairs in Carthage, and governed with as much vigor as if he had been there in person.

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[26] Euseb. vi. 36. That an Emperor like Philip, addicted to superstitions of all kinds, and having little of the Roman feeling for the State religion, should in his times of remorse have turned towards the Church, does not seem to me at all improbable. The reality of his faith is, of course, another question.

[27] S. Matt. x. 23. There was the additional reason that *Cyprianum ad leones* had become the cry, and his presence in the city exasperated the heathen.

*Many fall away.*

Of those who remained, not a few denied Christ in a variety of ways; some promptly,[28] some reluctantly, others under the agony of excruciating tortures. Some offered sacrifice to idols—*sacrificati;* some burned incense before the image of the Emperor—*thurificati;* those who had the means purchased immunity to themselves in the form of a written certificate or discharge,[29] and were called *libellatici*. Few of either of these classes fell permanently from the Faith. Even those who in the hour of trial had shown a disgraceful eagerness to stand fair with the judges, availed themselves of the earliest opportunity to retrace their steps. Their prevarication was caused by timidity and weakness; and the great body of them became afterwards fervid and passionate, but, from the same defects of character which had brought about their fall, exceedingly troublesome penitents.

*Three Classes of the Lapsed.*

*Many thrown into Prison.*

On the other hand, it was the policy of the magistrates to break the spirits of the faithful, rather than to arouse them by the spectacle of actual martyrdoms. The prisons, therefore, were crowded with Confessors. Some of these displayed the insolence, self-conceit, and spirit of bravado which are natural accompaniments of untutored courage, and by which martyrdom, as we have seen, was so frequently disgraced. The persecution, in fact, had taken the Church at unawares. Few were prepared to suffer for the Name of Christ; and in the few who were prepared, enthusiasm in some cases became a substitute for faith. The tortures inflicted by the heathen, therefore, were not the only trial of the more genuine Confessors. They had to brace themselves for the final conflict amid the strife of tongues, and sometimes amid scenes of scandalous confusion.[30] The prisons were thronged with sympathizing friends. Priests and Deacons ministered to the inmates. Women kissed their chains. Penitents solicited their powerful intervention. Demagogues endeavored to make tools of them. Flattery and adulation enveloped them in a cloud of impenetrable self-delusion. Their Bishop, who watched them from a distance, and who labored under the peculiar disadvantage of appearing to have avoided a conflict to which he incited others, had to adapt his exhortations to two distinct classes. One class, the most forward and influential, he rebuked and chastised. To do this, as he did, in the face of a busy faction, and against a popular sentiment which regarded the Confessor as nearer to God and consequently more powerful than the Bishop, required faith and courage of no ordinary kind. But there was another and large class which needed encouragement. High spirits and pure faith do not always go together. The vivacity of mind, which some of the martyrs exhibited to a troublesome extent, it was necessary to awaken and foster in others by every allowable expedient. With rebukes, therefore, he mingled the most eloquent appeals. The more he chastised the insolence of the martyrs, the more he exalted the dignity of their calling.[31] His own character, the meanwhile, he had to leave a prey to the foul tongue of calumny and detraction.

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[28] Cyprian complains (*De Lapsis*) that *a very large number* (maximus fratrum numerus) fell away at once.

[29] Some managed more quietly to get their names inserted in the register, as persons who had complied with the edict, without any request of their own to that effect; or sometimes the request was made, and the bribe paid, by friends of the parties without their knowledge. The Church discountenanced all such evasions.

*Scandals.*

*Two Classes of Martyrs.*

To the Priests and Deacons who ministered to the Confessors he gave minute directions,[32] urging them to prudence and self-restraint. They were to go to the prisons, for the administration of the Sacrament, one Deacon and one Priest at a time. No one should go oftener than was absolutely needed. All crowding and excitement were to be carefully avoided. Nothing was to be tolerated, in short, which should draw notice needlessly upon themselves, or exasperate the heathen.

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[30] *Epistol.* vi. Pariss.

[31] His first letter to the Confessors is entirely of this character. It is, perhaps, enthusiastic in its language; but a leader encouraging timid soldiers on the field of battle cannot afford to pick words. *Epistol.* lxxx. Pariss.

[32] *Epistol.* iv. Pariss.

*Directions to the Clergy.*

In the same prudent spirit he addressed himself to the case of those who had made themselves amenable to the discipline of the Church. A distinction was made between the three classes of those who had fallen.[33] The *libelli pacis* granted by some of the Martyrs, which in popular estimation were equivalent to a formal restoration to the privileges of communion, were to be accounted as things of naught. The Martyrs had no right to bestow such pardons. The lapsed of every sort, therefore, were to be shut off from the Table of the Lord, till they could plead their cause before the Clergy and Confessors and the whole body of the People. By this course Cyprian made many enemies to himself. But with equal disregard of personal considerations, he showed no favor to that stricter party, not numerous, perhaps, but fanatical and highly influential, who were disposed to treat the lapsed as apostates from the Faith, leaving no door open for reconciliation. The Laity, in such cases, were as a general rule less tolerant than the Clergy.[34] Cyprian in some instances had not only to plead with them for mercy, but "to extort" mercy from them. Indeed, he was not a little censured for his facility in restoring men to communion whose professions of penitence were open to suspicion. But in all such points he was equal to his work. Much as he magnified the Church, and firmly as he believed that to be separate from the Church was to

*Treatment of the Lapsed.*

*Libelli Pacis.*

*Two Parties.*

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[33] Sins after Baptism were atoned in the early Church by the *Exomologesis*,—a *public confession*, with tears, fastings, etc., of greater or less duration, according to the nature of the offence. It was probably about the times of Decius that the distinction of *flentes*, *audientes*, *genuflectentes*, and *consistentes* grew up. See Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book XVIII. c. i.

[34] S. Cypr. *Ep*. liv. 17, Pariss.

be separate from Christ, he was equally well assured that no peace with the Church would stand which was not sanctioned by the Gospel. It is the Lord alone who pardons; the Lord who is to be appeased. Men can act, in such matters, but as the instrument of the Lord. Any judgment, therefore, or any absolution apart from the Lord's revealed will, is necessarily good for nothing.[35]

*The Church and the Gospel.*

These counsels and exhortations were not in all instances equally successful. One Lucian, a Confessor, addressed a letter to "Pope Cyprian," and through him to all Bishops, declaring that those in prison *had given a full pardon to the lapsed*, and requiring him and the Clergy generally to respect their decision; otherwise, it was plainly intimated, they would fall under the displeasure of the holy Martyrs. This seems sufficiently absurd. Its absurdity, however, did not make it the less dangerous to the peace of the Church. It was the beginning of troubles which continued long after the Martyrs themselves had gone peaceably to their rest. For most of these men, both in Africa, and in Rome where their conduct had been equally objectionable, were brought at length to a more Christian frame of mind. Their long and cruel sufferings—many of them being slowly starved to death in prison—proved a means of grace to them. From a letter of the stout-hearted Lucian, written eight days after this punishment had begun, we learn that sixteen had died, and others were quietly awaiting their end. It appears from the same epistle that while he still felt it his duty to give *peace* to those who applied, the gift was coupled with the condition that the recipients should plead their cause and make confession before the Bishop. A letter from Caldonius, another Confessor, states still more clearly the necessity of compliance with this reasonable condition.[36]

*Arrogance of the Martyrs.*

*Their edifying end.*

But the real root of the mischief was among that party of

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[35] S. Cyprian, *De Lapsis*, 16, 17.

[36] S. Cyprian. *Op. Epist.* xvi.–xxi. Pariss.

Presbyters in Carthage, who had so strenuously opposed S. Cyprian's election. Of these the chief leader was one Novatus,[37] a Presbyter in bad odor, who just before the persecution had been accused of shocking crimes, and who consequently looked forward to peace and the restoration of Cyprian with no particular favor. With him were associated the great body of the lapsed; many of whom were persons of wealth and consequence. Felicissimus, a factious layman, whom in some way or other he got to be made Deacon, was his most able coadjutor. By the intrigues of these men, the Carthaginian Church community were thrown into confusion. The prospect of Cyprian's return to the city inspired a general panic. When the Presbyters who remained faithful to their Bishop endeavored in compliance with his instructions to carry out the laws, the result was a rebellion. Felicissimus and his party openly organized, and, proceeding from one wickedness to another, at length put Cyprian and his adherents under a ban of excommunication.

*Novatus and his Party.*

*Felicissimus.*

*Schism in Carthage.*

By such acts, however, they lost their hold upon that numerous party of the lapsed, who had acted with them more from dislike of discipline than from any hearty belief in the goodness of their cause. Cyprian promptly availed himself of the blunder they had committed. He declared them excommunicated, not by any act of his, but by their own voluntary secession. It was no longer possible, then, to choose between two parties in the Church. Men must cast in their lot with one or other of two separate communions. Under these circumstances many returned to the bosom of the Church. The rest having procured the ordination of Fortunatus, one of the five Presbyters, as their Bishop, sent Felicissimus over to Rome; where the dominant party, being long ago

*Self-condemned.*

*Goes to Rome.*

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[37] The moral character of this man is painted by S. Cyprian in the blackest colors; so much so that many have questioned the truth of the portrait. It is characteristic, however, of times of great religious fervor, that the good are very good, and the bad are very bad. Medium characters do not flourish at such periods. *Epistol.* xlviii. Pariss.

*Cornelius wavers.*

committed to the cause of an indulgent discipline, and being harassed at that period by the austere faction of Novatianus, might naturally be expected to receive them with some favor. At all events, Felicissimus was not sparing of threats, as well as protestations. And Cornelius, the Roman Bishop, was not very decided.[38] He was, perhaps, unwilling to drive so influential a body as these African schismatics into the already powerful ranks of the opposition party in Rome. He hesitated for some time. But Cyprian was armed for all emergencies. Sounding one of his vigorous trumpet-blasts[39] into the ears of the wavering Roman Council, he brought them at length to a satisfactory decision. Felicissimus was rejected, and had thenceforward to look for countenance elsewhere.

*Novatianism.*

*Puritan Scheme.*

Novatus in like manner betook himself to Rome. There he fell in with the more famous Novatianus: a man of learning and orthodoxy, but of questionable morals, who, at the head of a faction consisting mainly of Confessors, had been a rival candidate to Cornelius for the Episcopal chair; but failing of the election, had managed to procure consecration in a surreptitious way.[40] This man stood on a higher and stronger platform than the Carthaginian leaders. His object, as he contended, was *the purity* of the Church. He would keep her free from all contamination. Those who had fallen, therefore, in times of persecution, or those who had been guilty of any capital sin, were to remain suspended from communion till restored by Christ himself at the Day of final Judgment. With these views Novatus accorded more readily than might have been expected from his previous career. He had doubtless learned by this time, from his experience as a party-leader, that discipline is as necessary to keep men out of the Church, as to keep them in. He readily coöperated with Novatianus, therefore, in the erection of a new and severe system of ecclesiastical communion.

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[38] *Epistol.* liv. 2.

[39] Cyp. *Epistol.* liv. Pariss.

[40] It is said that he invited three Bishops to his house, feasted, flattered, made them drunk, and so procured consecration. In this case, as in those of Felicissimus and Fortunatus, the *numerosity* of the Episcopate had an attendant evil, that ordination could sometimes be had in violation of the canons. The Bishops of the smaller Sees were not always shining lights. The metropolitan system, therefore, and the practice of consecrating Bishops, and sometimes Presbyters, only in Council, was a necessary safeguard. In the case of Fortunatus, the consecration seems to have been performed by Privatus, an excommunicated Bishop. *Epistol.* liv. 11.

*Two Leaders.*

The Sect was soon abandoned, to the great joy of the faithful both in Rome and Carthage, by most of the Confessors; Cyprian, by his zealous but charitable letters to these misguided men, having done much to dispel their delusion.[41] It gained recruits, however, in other parts of the world. Declaring open war upon Cyprian and Cornelius, and spreading calumnies against them in all directions, the leaders plied briskly between Italy and North Africa, and in the latter country especially made a permanent lodgment. One Maximus seems to have acted as their Bishop in Carthage. But of him, as of Fortunatus, little beyond the name is known.

*In Rome and Carthage.*

Like Montanism, from the lees of which heresy it drew much of its sourness and strength, Novatianism had not a little in common with Catholic Christianity. The Puritan severity, which was its chief point of difference, could plead the sanction of high names in the Church, and was popular with a large party of orthodox believers, especially in Rome. It was one of the points, in fact, in which philosophy and religion were at variance. That *all sins are equal*, and that *a grave man ought to be immovable*,[42] were Stoic maxims which had greater weight with such men as Tatian, Hippolytus, and Novatian than the evangelic precepts of mercy and forgiveness. In spite of the taint of schism, therefore, the followers of this Sect were numerous and respectable, both in the East and West; and there is reason to believe that, partly by virtue of rigorous discipline, partly by the close watch

*In other Places*

*Nature of the Schism.*

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[41] The letters of Cyprian, Cornelius, and the Confessors. are found in Cyprian's works. *Epistol.* xl. et ss. Pariss.

[42] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* lv. 13,—an admirable exposé of the fallacies of this harsh philosophy.

which a small society can keep upon its members, and still more from the reformatory influence of new scenes, new associations, and a newly awakened sense of responsibility, they continued for some time an orderly, sedate, and highly influential body.[43] Their creed was orthodox, except on the point of absolution. They indulged, however, an intensely bitter feeling against the Church. They regarded her as a synagogue of Jezebels, Balaams, and Iscariots; and when they made proselytes from the "apostate" communion, they in all cases caused them to be rebaptized.

*Bitter Feeling.*

On the other hand, the secession of so many troublesome men, with the lull of persecution which followed the death of Decius, gave Cyprian and his worthy colleague, Cornelius of Rome, an opportunity to gain ground in the restoration of Church discipline. Some of the lapsed were reconciled fully to the Church. Others were put on penance. Indulgence was provided for particular emergencies.[44] Numerous Councils were held; and as disorders similar to those of Rome and Carthage were more or less prevalent in other portions of the Church, a discipline sufficiently uniform in its character was everywhere matured, systematized, and gradually established.

*Discipline restored,* A.D. 251–253.

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[43] Novatian stands high among orthodox writers. *Acesius,* a Novatian Bishop, was among those summoned by Constantine to the Council of Nice. See Socrates, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 10; v. 10. Novatian's *Liber de Trinitate* is to be found in *Tertullian's Works, Nic. Rigalt.* 1689.

[44] So long as the discipline of the Church remained a real thing, *indulgences*—such as remission or shortening of the time of public penance—were indispensable. In later times discipline became a nullity; and *indulgences,* being no longer applicable to their original use, were transferred to such things as absolving men from vows hastily assumed; or by a most monstrous abuse, to the release of souls from purgatorial pains. In the early Church the term meant simply *admission to communion* (of those who seemed truly penitent) *before the term of suspension from communion had canonically expired.* The power of remission was with the Bishop and Presbyters; but in the African Church, and more or less in the Church generally, the people were allowed a voice in the matter.

## CHAPTER III.

### DECIAN TIMES.

THE Decian persecution, with the innumerable calamities that followed, extending as it did into all parts of the Roman Empire, was a time of no ordinary terror: it was eminently an epoch in Church History, a crisis, a day of judgment; a season of such universal sifting and probation as Christians had not known in any other period of their varied and calamitous experience.

*A Great Crisis.*

It has been mentioned incidentally in the preceding chapter of this Book, that the approach of persecution had been heralded by mysterious forebodings or presentiments upon the souls of men. In one of the many visions thus occuring,[1] "long before the arrival of the desolating storm," there was a voice from Heaven commanding the people to pray; but when they began to utter their petitions their voices jangled and their hearts were out of tune, and no true prayer arose because there was no harmony. In another dream, a venerable Householder was seen sitting, with a young man on his right hand and another on his left. The one on the right sat grave and pensive, and not without a shade of sorrowful indignation. The other on the left was triumphant and exultant; and held in his hand a net, which with a wanton and wicked leer he threatened continually to cast over the heads of the bystanders. Dreams of this kind were but echoes of waking thoughts, and belonged to healthy minds like that of S. Cyprian. They sprang from a deep conviction of some judgment needed;

*Warnings.*

*Dreams.*

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[1] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* vii. Pariss.

they pointed to nothing more than some judgment coming. But when the expected crisis had actually arrived, the terrors of the times naturally hurried the mind forward from particular passing judgments to that great and anti-typal judgment which is to be the end of all. The nearness of the Lord's coming was at all times vividly realized by the faith of the early Church. The very posture of their worship, as they stood with head erect, arms outstretched, and eyes looking eagerly forward, was a constant reminder to them of this awful expectation.[2] But in times of such complicated horrors as those under Decius and his successors, "when the very Martyrs scandalized the Church; when even Confession in some cases was but a swelling, irreverential, and insolent bravado; when torments in other cases were torments without end, without issue, without solace,—torments which kept the crown at a tantalizing distance, making the heart sick while they excruciated the body, so that if any one escaped and reaped the reward of glory, it was not by termination of the torture, but by mere alacrity in dying;"[3] when, in the civil world, "every instant of time was marked, every province of the Roman world was afflicted, by barbarous invaders and military tyrants, and the ruined empire seemed to approach the last and fatal moment of its dissolution;" when, in the natural world, "there were inundations, earthquakes, preternatural darkness, with a long and general famine, and a furious plague, depopulating whole towns, and consuming according to a moderate calculation the moiety of the human species:"[4] at such periods it is not wonderful that the common fear or hope, which ever it might be, became occasionally an enthusiastic and perhaps dangerous delusion.

*The coming of the Lord.*

*Signs in the Church,*

*in the State,*

*in the Natural World.*

Yet, even in the worst cases, this confident expectation of the end was far less irrational than has sometimes been pretended. A mere fatalist may sneer at such a faith.[5] It may awaken the smiles of those who suppose the world to be governed only by mathematically fixed laws. But the early Christian conceived of no such mechanism of fate. He had faith in a living God. He believed in One who hears and answers prayer. But if the supreme Governor and Controller really answers prayer, it follows that the duration of human life, the vicissitudes of empire, the existence of the world, the chances and changes of all earthly things, are in the strictest sense of the word *precarious* or contingent: the shadow of final doom may be brought backward or carried forward on the dial-plate of time, with a freedom as absolute, as to a mere fatalist philosophy it is inconceivable and impossible. Jonah was a true prophet, though Nineveh's forty days passed without witnessing its fall.

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[2] See the figures of "praying men and women," in Perret, *Catecombes de Rome*, etc.

[3] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* vii. Pariss.

[4] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, etc. vol. i. ch. x.

*Early Christian Views justified.*

The early Christian, indeed, did not theorize as yet upon this momentous subject. He believed, as the Scriptures taught him, in a Saviour and a Judge always near at hand. He was on the lookout for a Judgment surely coming, ever impending, yet capable of suspension or even of protracted, and indefinite delay. The consequence was that with each successive appearance of the portents of that Judgment, he lifted up his head; with a mixed feeling, like that of S. Paul when he was in a strait betwixt two wishes,[6] he partly hoped and prayed for it, yet, as taught by the Church in her petitions *pro mora finis*, did his utmost by prayer and penitence to stay or to avert it; and so, when the "signs" seemed to fail, when a lesser crisis passed without manifesting the great and consummating Judgment, he was in no way disappointed, nor was his faith at all shaken. A man, who having

*The Judge always near.*

*Seeming failure of the Signs of Judgment.*

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[5] Gibbon sneers impartially at the common belief of the Church, and at the promise, on which that belief was founded. The promise was uttered, however, not to inform men of the time when judgment should come, but that they might be *always* on the lookout for that time. S. Matt. xxv. 13.

[6] Philipp. i. 23, 24.

never seen the sunshine, yet confidently expects it, might reasonably mistake the dawn for the complete and perfect day. One who has never witnessed death, might anticipate its approach in each momentary swoon. On the same principle, the believer of early times was not irrational in looking upon each successive trial as a fulfilment of Prophecy; he was only mistaken as to the *finality* of that fulfilment. He acted merely on that principle of common-sense, by which knowing the end to be certain somewhere, yet not knowing where, we look for it as confidently at the *turn* of a long lane, as at its actual termination.

*Numbers viewed as Symbols.*

To this it may be added, that the early Christian did not base his hope or fear upon arithmetical calculations. He was influenced more by "the signs of the times."[7] As to the numbers of days or months or years in the language of Prophecy, he regarded them as *symbols* of God's time, not rigid definitions. But it is of the nature of symbols—even, it may be said, of mathematical symbols, and therefore much more of spiritual—that they admit within their range an almost infinite variety of particular applications.

*Particular Martyrs.*

But to return from this digression: the persecution under Decius was common to all the Churches. Among its principal Martyrs was Alexander, the venerable Bishop of Jerusalem. Having borne his testimony at the tribunal, he was tortured and thrown into prison, where he peacefully expired. Babylas,[8] Bishop of Antioch, won his crown in like manner. Eudæmon, Bishop of Smyrna, lapsed from the Faith; but Pionius, one of his Presbyters, was crucified and burnt. In Ephesus, Maximus was one of the earliest victims. In all places, many fled into the rural districts, or took refuge in caves and solitary wilds. Among these were seven youths of Ephesus, whose bodies, found many years after in a cavern, gave rise to the celebrated legend of the Seven Sleepers.

*The Seven Sleepers.*

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[7] Diem ultimum et occultum, *nec ulli præter Patri notum*, et tamen *signis atque portentis*, et concussionibus elementorum . . . prænotatum. Tertul. *De Res. Carnis*, 22; Philastr. *De Hæres.* cvii.

[8] Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i.

*Gregory the Wonder-worker.*

*His Miracles.*

*His Success.*

S. Gregory, the renowned Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea in Pontus, surnamed Thaumaturgus for his wonderful works, was admonished by a vision to decline the persecution, and retired with the majority of his flock into a wilderness. He was a disciple of Origen, in whose school at Cæsarea he studied for five years, and for whom he ever afterwards retained the profoundest veneration. The miracles related of him were committed to writing about a century after his decease by Gregory of Nyssa, and seem to have been collected chiefly from the memory of the aged grandmother of the latter.[9] The tradition of them, therefore, had abundance of time to grow. His presence, it is said, dispossessed a heathen shrine of the dæmon that held it; he stayed by his prayers a pestilence that broke out among the people of Neo-Cæsarea; he quelled the overflowing of the river Lycus; when he was searched for in the woods, in which he and his companions were hidden during the persecution, he was miraculously veiled from the eyes of the officers. In consequence of these and similar wonders, he was called among the Gentiles a second Moses. His greatest work, that he found but seventeen Christians in his diocese when appointed to it, and left but seventeen unconverted heathen, rests, it is said, upon his dying testimony. Stories of this kind require to be supported by contemporaneous witnesses. That Gregory, however, was a man of prayer and of extraordinary gifts, and that a peculiar Divine blessing rested upon his labors, seems to have been the belief of the whole early Church; a belief the more entitled to credit, that, belonging as he did to the school of an excommunicated teacher,[10] he was hardly the person that would have been selected to make a hero of, unless he had had more than a common claim to such distinction. After the persecution was over, he caused the festivals of the martyrs to be celebrated with increased solemnity; and many heathen thereby were attracted to the Church.

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[9] He died about the year 270, or a little after. See Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i.; and Greg. Nyss. *in Vit. Greg. Thaum.*

[10] His own orthodoxy has been impeached; and is defensible only on the ground that in his controversy with Ælian he spoke *οὐ δογματικῶς, ἀλλ' ἀγωνιστικῶς*; using words in the heat of disputation which are not to be taken to the letter.

*Dionysius of Alexandria.*

In Alexandria, Dionysius the Great, another of Origen's disciples, was snatched from martyrdom by the loving officiousness of his friends. His record of his escape, and his testimony to the courage and cruel sufferings of the martyrs, have been preserved in the pages of Eusebius.[11] The persecution, it appears, did not begin as elsewhere with the action of the Emperor. It was an outbreak of popular fanaticism excited by a man who pretended to be a prophet, and preceded the imperial edict by about one year. It raged with such fury that Alexandria had the appearance of a city taken by storm.

*Anchorites.*

*God everywhere.*

*Solitary and Social Religion.*

But in Egypt, as elsewhere, innumerable believers sought safety in retreat. Some fled into the desert; and many of these, among whom the aged Bishop of Cheræmon and his wife are particularly mentioned, were never heard of more. Some were captured by predatory tribes. The greater part perished of hunger and exposure. The pious feeling that God was everywhere, as near to the believer in solitude as in the assemblies of the faithful; that the lack of sacraments and priestly ministrations would prove no loss, where the living sacrifice of a contrite heart and humble spirit was faithfully presented:[12] the belief, in short, that in every place there could be a true and spiritual worship, led many of these wanderers to persist in their retreat. Thus, while the general tendency of the Church was towards the ideal of social or corporate religion, there sprang up a strong propulsion towards the opposite extreme. The principle of *individualism* was mightily asserted. Paulus, a youth of twenty-three years of age, afterwards known as "prince of the anchorites," found solitude so refreshing that he remained a contented dweller in the wilderness to the venerable age of one hundred and thirteen years.

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[11] Euseb. *Eccles. History*, vi. 40–42.

[12] S. Cypr. *Epistol.* lxxvi. 4.

This impulse to hermit-life was the beginning of a great and living movement. Involving maxims remarkably at variance with what have been called the hierarchical tendencies of that day, it is wonderful that Church rulers regarded it with so much favor as they did. It shows a liberality, on their part, and a breadth and facility of charitable construction, for which in modern times they have received hardly sufficient credit.[13]

*Military Martyrs.*

In Asia Proper, Lycia, Pamphylia, Bithynia, Capadocia, Crete, Cyprus, Gaul, there were numerous victims. The army, also, as was common in persecutions, presented its quota of illustrious witnesses. On one occasion, when a Christian of Alexandria stood trembling before the judge and seemed to waver in his confession, the soldiers who stood around indignantly frowned upon him,[14] and then by a sudden impulse ran up to the tribunal and declared themselves believers.

*Great Plague, A.D. 252.*

*Panic among the Heathen.*

As already intimated, the persecution, ceasing for awhile on the death of Decius, was followed by a great and terrible plague. Such pestilences are common in ancient history, and so far as their horrors are concerned, nothing can be added to the eloquence and pathos of contemporary descriptions. But there is one feature of such visitations, which none of the classic writers seem ever to have witnessed. The heathen were courageous against flesh and blood. Against the ghostly presence of the pestilence that walketh in darkness they were utterly impotent No sense of honor, no ties of blood, no obligations of religion could nerve them to their duty. Those smitten by the destroyer were left uncared for while living, and unburied when dead. The claims of humanity were forgotten. All who had any place to flee to consulted their own safety and fled. Those who alone remained were either poverty-stricken wretches that could not get away, or fiends in human shape who battened upon the common misery, and hovered like plague-flies around the couches of the dying and the dead. Such was the spectacle that heathenism presented. Christianity first taught men to struggle manfully and successfully with the invisible foe. While the idolaters were scattering in all directions in irremediable panic, S. Cyprian in Carthage, S. Dionysius in Alexandria, and other holy men in many other places, were rallying the faithful to a warfare more heroic, and a triumph more truly glorious, than poet or historian had ever as yet recorded.

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[13] The subject of this paragraph is further treated in chap. vi. of this Book, towards the end.

[14] Euseb. vi. 41.

*Christian Courage.*

In Alexandria, the heathen, considering the pestilence more terrific than any other terror and more afflictive than any other affliction, an evil beyond all hope,[15] resigned themselves to it in uncontrollable dismay. Such panics added of course to the number of the victims. The Christians, now disciplined by persecution, struggled more courageously and in consequence suffered less. They had learned of late to take pleasure in tribulations. As no spot in Egypt had been a stranger to their sorrows, so none was left unhallowed by tokens of the joy of their festival occasions. To men thus trained to cheerfulness of spirit, the pestilence came, "no less than other events, as a school of discipline and probation." It gave them an opportunity to become, in a sense not realized before, "the off-scourings of all men." Regarding death in such a cause "as little inferior to martyrdom," they paid every possible attention to "the bodies of the saints; they laid them on their bosoms, purged their eyes, closed their mouths, composed their limbs, prepared them decently for burial, and calmly awaited the time when they themselves should receive the same kind offices from others." Similar charities were extended to the heathen. And though the latter were disposed at first to attribute the plague to Divine anger against the Christians, and therefore to renew the persecution, yet in time their evil was overcome with good, and the chastened Church once more gained favor with her foes.

*Plague in Alexandria.*

*Care of the Dead.*

*Evil overcome with Good.*

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[15] Euseb. vii. 22.

In Carthage, Cyprian awakened the same spirit by trumpet-blasts of no uncertain sound. "The Kingdom of God, beloved, is rapidly approaching. Terror is everywhere. Lo! the prison-walls are shaking, the floods are rising, the tempest is descending, the world, old and weary, is nodding to its fall. But as the world passes away, the reward of life and glory is brought nearer to us. Paradise, once forfeited but now recovered, is opening to our view."[16] By such like exhortations he enlisted the martyr-spirit, now chastened and purified, in a work more charitable and useful, though it was hard to persuade the Africans that it was also more glorious than martyrdom itself. He enlarged particularly on their duty to the heathen. The persecution had been an excellent school of patience. The pestilence could teach them a lesson of beneficence and mercy. It was an opportunity, in short, to show themselves children of Him who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good,[17] and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

*Cyprian's Appeals.*

*New phase of the Martyr Spirit.*

The plague raged everywhere, and everywhere the Christians pursued the same course. The wars, famines, and disorders which preceded or accompanied this calamity appealed in another form to the charity of the faithful. The Numidian Church, impoverished by Barbarian invaders, was unable to redeem its members taken captive. The Carthaginians, though in little better plight, came up generously to their aid; and, having made a collection of about one hundred thousand sestertia,[18] sent it with a list of the names of the donors, that these might be duly remembered in the prayers of the grateful recipients of their bounty. This was done "not as a matter of charity, but rather of religious obligation"; for a member of Christ taken captive was regarded as "God's temple in danger of defilement."[19] In other parts of the Empire there

*Wars and Famines.*

*Christian Charity.*

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[16] S. Cyprian. *De Mortalitate.* [17] *Vit. S. Cypr.* per Pontium Diac. c. 9.

[18] About four thousand dollars; considering, however, the greater value of money in those days, it was equivalent to a much larger sum.

[19] S. Cyprian. *Epistol.* lix. Pariss.

were similar claims similarly met. The terrible Goths, in battling with whom Decius and his army ignominiously perished;[20] the adventurous Franks, whose ravages extended from the Rhine to the south of Spain and the provinces of Mauritania; the Alemanni, who on the death of Decius flouted their victorious banners in the face of the proud mistress of the world; and finally the Persians, who eventually penetrated to Antioch and sacked the cities of Asia Minor: all these were making prisoners on every side; and to redeem her share of the captives was a formidable addition to the burdens of the Church. On the other hand, the light of the Gospel was not lost in the darkness of Barbarian invasion. The Christian captives in many cases proved to be truly "ambassadors in bonds."

A.D. 251.

*Ransom of Captives.*

Under Gallus, the successor of Decius, the persecution was renewed; and after a respite of three or four years, occasioned by his death, it was taken up again in a more systematic way and with greater determination by the Emperor Valerian.[21] In preparation for these new trials, Cyprian, with the concurrence of his Council, granted an indulgence to the lapsed, remitting what remained of their term of public penance. In Rome, Carthage, and Antioch, Novatianism at this period was formally condemned.

*Gallus,* A.D. 251-253.

*Valerian,* A.D. 253-259.

*Ninth Persecution.*

Cornelius the Roman Bishop suffered martyrdom under Gallus. About the same time Origen was released from the burden of a troubled and laborious existence; a man whose indefatigable industry during life was rivalled only by the wretched tenacity of hatred, which in less charitable ages that came after dogged his memory and his name. His sufferings in the Decian times were of the most fearful description. For many days, in the deepest recesses of a prison, his diminutive and spare frame was stretched

*Cornelius and Lucius, Martyrs.*

*Sufferings of Origen.*

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[20] See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. x.

[21] See chap. iv. of this Book.

to the distance of four holes on the rack,[22] while the boon of dying for the Faith was cruelly denied him. He bore up nobly against all the efforts to subdue his spirit; but not long after his release he sank under the injuries he had received in prison.

*Stephen,* A.D. 253.

Lucius, the successor of Cornelius, was another martyr of this period. After a month's vacancy of his See, Stephen, a true Roman in policy and in birth, was elected into his place.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ROME AND THE WEST.

*Origin of Roman Church.*

THE Roman Church, first planted, it is probable, by some of the Pentecostal converts, but watered by the doctrine and blood of S. Peter[1] and S. Paul, had already at the beginning of the second century acquired a fame proportioned to the dignity of the place and its pilgrimage.[2] To S. Ignatius it was venerable as "presiding in the seat of the Romans." A more solid title to his respect was its forwardness in the grace of charity;[3] of which evangelic virtue the fraternal epistle, written in its name by S. Clement to the disorderly Corinthians, was an early and well-known example.

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[22] Euseb. vi. 39; Huettii, *Origeniana*, lib. i. cap. iv. Origen speaks of his own body as *corpusculum*,—*τὸ σωμάτιον*. The fifth hole on the rack was the measurement of a man of ordinary size. Origen's being stretched, therefore, only to the fourth is a proof of his diminutive stature.

[1] According to Lactantius, S. Peter came to Rome during the reign of Nero, twenty-five years after the Ascension, or A.D. 58: a much more probable account than the story of his journey thither just after the conversion of Cornelius. See Lactant. *De Mort. Persecut.*, with note of Baluz.

[2] Ἡ *ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ παροικοῦσα* Ῥώμην—quæ Romæ *peregrinatur*—was the usual title.

[3] S. Ignat. *Ep. ad Roman.* The phrase, *προκαθημένη τῆς ἀγάπης*, is translated by some "presiding over the Agape," *i. e.*, as Döllinger renders it, "the

The order of succession of its first Bishops, Linus, Cletus, and Clemens, has been much disputed.[4] It is generally conceded that Clement was one of the three, and died in exile somewhere about the end of the first century.

*First Bishops.*

Through the second century the Church continued to increase, though chiefly among the Hellenic part of the population.[5] Its position, however, in the great queen city of the world gave it *potiorem principalitatem*,[6] as S. Irenæus expressed it; enabling it to take the lead in all matters in which a leader was required, and making it a centre of traditions from every quarter,—a rallying-point to the Gentile, as Jerusalem for awhile had been to the Jewish Christians. It was distinguished for missionary zeal, and for readiness to give assistance to feebler Churches.[7] One fruit of this we have seen in that vigorous scion, the Church of Africa Proconsularis: a Church more intensely Latin, and destined to exert a greater influence upon the intellectual tone of Latin Christianity, than the great mother See itself. Hence, to Africa, Rome was what Corinth was to Achaia, or Ephesus to Asia, *auctoritatas præsto:* the most accessible living witness to apostolic tradition. In the eyes of Tertullian and S. Cyprian,

*Eminent Position.*

*Missionary Zeal.*

*Relation to Carthage.*

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covenant of love," namely, the "whole Church." The context is against any such rendering. It may be here observed that, in the opening of his Epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians, S. Ignatius stretches language to the utmost for terms of praise. If, therefore, Rome had possessed any such *supremacy* as modern Rome contends for, Ignatius would not have omitted it, nor would he have lacked suitable language in which to express it. See *Patr. Apostol.* Oxon. 1838.

[4] Pearson. *Op. Posthuma:* Gies. ⸹ 34, n. 10. The order of succession here given has the authority of Irenæus apud Euseb. *Eccles. Hist.* v. 6. Observe, that while the ancients universally ascribe the foundation of the Episcopate of Rome to S. Peter and S. Paul, Linus is usually spoken of as the first Bishop proper. See Euseb. iv. 1; Barrow, *on the Supremacy*, supp. 3, 4, etc.

[5] Milman's *Latin Christianity.*

[6] This and similar expressions are satisfactorily explained in Gieseler, ⸹ 51, n. 10, etc. See also two excellent notes on the subject in the Oxford translation of Tertullian, vol. i. p. 470; also Forbesii, *Instructiones Historico-theologicæ*, op. tom. ii. lib. xv. xvi.

[7] Euseb. iv. 23.

it was a starting-point of the unity of the priesthood:[8] a far-spreading root of Catholic Religion.

*Attempt of Victor,* A.D. 196.

Victor, an African by birth, though probably of Roman parentage, was the first who showed a disposition to pervert this honorable influence into an encroachment upon the freedom of other Churches. He was rebuked, however, by S. Irenæus, and the paschal question,[9] in which he interfered, remained unsettled till finally disposed of by the general Council at Nicæa.

*Resort of Heretics.*

But Rome was not merely a centre; it was, as Tacitus implies, a sewer of the world; and falsehood and corruption floated thither as readily as truth.

*Simon, Marcion, and others.*

Simon Magus, it is said, obtained his chief triumphs there, and was there defeated by S. Peter. Marcion, Valentinus, and other Gnostic leaders, found a hearing there. At a somewhat later period, Montanus and the new prophets gained an influence for awhile over Victor himself; and thence spread their doctrine, rife with the seeds of schism, through all the Churches of the West. The reaction against Montanism filled the city with another swarm of heretics. Praxeas, Theodotus, Artemon, the disciples of Noëtus, Sabellius, and the obscure Judaizing faction which

*Praxeas and others.*

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[8] In the interpretation of the language of these African Fathers, a mistake is sometimes made by inserting the *definite* article when the context and general sense require the *indefinite*. Rome, or Jerusalem, or any other apostolic Church could be called *matrix religionis catholicæ*, etc.; that is, *a* source, *a* root. For the claims of Jerusalem, see Gieseler, § 94, nn. 40, 41. In the *Oratio pro Fidelibus*, in the Apostol. Constitutions, the Bishop of Jerusalem is prayed for *first*, then the Bishops of Rome and Antioch. As to the authority of Rome in the West, De Marca (*De Concord. Sacerdot. et Imper.* vii. 1) abundantly proves the following proposition: "The ancient Church appointed Bishops over the chief cities of every region. The supreme power was given to the Metropolitan in Council with his brother Bishops. Therefore the ecclesiastical decisions of each province were of supreme authority and could not be appealed from." This opinion is combated, but to very little purpose, by Schelstrate (*Eccles. Afric. sub Primat.* etc.). For the question of the Roman Patriarchate, see Palmer, *on the Church*, part vii. ch. vii; Bingham's *Antiquities*, ix. v. 1.

[9] Book II. ch. ix.

hatched the famous *Clementina*,[10] had each their day of prosperity in Rome; and, if we are to credit the statements of Hippolytus, the taint of heresy and evil living struck deep into the characters of the Bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus.

*Zephyrinus*, A.D. 203.

*Kindness of Marcia.*

*Dissimulation of the Bishop.*

Zephyrinus, it is said,[11] was ignorant of sacred learning—totally illiterate, in fact; and therefore surrendered himself to the guidance of the cunning flatterer Callistus. This latter had been a slave; then a species of banker, doing business largely on the credit of an indulgent master; then a defaulter; and finally a volunteer for martyrdom, having put himself in this way of restoring his broken credit by disturbing public worship in a Jewish Synagogue on the Sabbath. For this last offence he was scourged by order of the Prefect of the City, and banished to the Sardinian mines. Afterwards Marcia, the mistress of Commodus, who, as we have seen, was favorable to the Church, procured an edict from the Emperor for the recall of the Christian exiles; and Callistus, though expressly excepted from the benefit of the decree, managed in some way or other to return with the rest. All this happened during the pontificate of Victor. When Zephyrinus succeeded to the episcopal chair, he saw in Callistus a useful coadjutor in the work of "oppressing the Clergy"; put him in charge of the Cemetery, a post of no little honor; and made him his adviser and confidential friend. Under his guidance the Bishop, it is said, played a double part. While he seemed to lend an ear to the admonitions of Hippolytus and the orthodox side, he secretly favored the followers of the heretic Noëtus. But on this latter point there was no little difference of opinion among the Romans.

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[10] See Gies. § 58; and Book II. ch. vii. of this History.

[11] I merely abridge the lively narrative of Hippolytus: *Refut. Omn. Hæres.* ix. 12; an account valuable for the insight it gives into the state of parties. As to the *facts* of the case, there is probably some exaggeration. See Bunsen's *Hippolytus;* Chr. Wordsworth's *Church of Rome in the Third Century, with reference to Hippolytus;* and Döllinger, *Hippolytus* u. *Kallistus.*

Hippolytus and his friends not only failed to persuade others that their Bishop was a heretic and a dissembler, but soon found themselves in a hopeless minority, under the nickname of *Ditheists*[12] or believers in *two* Gods.

*Ditheists.*

Callistus succeeded Zephyrinus, and Hippolytus was placed in a still more uncomfortable position. Sabellius, indeed, was excommunicated;—a kind of peace-offering, it was thought, to the austere Bishop of Porto. But Callistus soon showed a leaning to some other shade of the Patripassian heresy. To this he added lax views of discipline, with novel and high assumptions of sacerdotal power. There was no sin, he said, that he had not power to remit. Not even for mortal sins could a Bishop be deposed from his office. Not only might married men, but even the *twice* or *thrice* married, be admitted to Holy Orders; and those already in Orders might marry without sin. When Hippolytus remonstrated against all this, he received only the sharp answer of the Apostle, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" Or, if that did not suffice him, he was reminded of "the wheat and tares which grow up together until the harvest"; or of "the net that draws in fish both bad and good"; or of "the Ark in which clean and unclean took refuge together"; or, in short, of "many other things which Callistus interpreted in like manner."

*Callistus, A.D. 217.*

*Sabellius condemned.*

*Laxity imputed.*

*Justified by Callistus.*

The consequence was, according to Hippolytus, that people were quite bewitched with "the sorcerer" Callistus; and, though secret crimes and incredible immoralities[13] were supposed to be encouraged by him, yet "many clung to him from a conviction that affairs were in the main well managed." Having only one side of the story, and that from a witness boiling over with personal and theological resent-

*His Views popular.*

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[12] He taught, in other words, the Divinity of the Son; but, in maintaining His Personality, made Him *subordinate* to the Father.

[13] He is said to have connived at concubinage with slaves, child-murder, and the like, on the part of wealthy Roman ladies: a charge which shows, at least, what sort of scandals could be circulated and believed.

ment, we are not in a position to judge, at the present day, how far they were mistaken in this conclusion.

*Rome a Battle-ground.*

*Two Elements.*

The truth would seem to be, both from the testimony of Hippolytus and from Tertullian's[14] angry invectives, that Rome at that period was a great battle-ground of conflicting principles. Two elements, especially, contended for the mastery there. The Greek spirit, versatile, subtle, keen in doctrinal disputation, and somewhat impracticable, found its meet exponent in Hippolytus and his party. Against this, the Latin spirit, the *genius loci*, more practical, more politic, and in the nicer points of divinity more ready to temporize, was beginning to make head. As this latter temper prevailed, the result was a sort of Fabian policy in the polemics of the day: a slowness of decision, and perhaps of apprehension,[15] with regard to conflicting theories, which gave Rome in the long run a practical advantage. The more impetuous Greeks might chafe at the temporary favor shown to Marcion, that "first-born of the devil," as he was called by S. Polycarp; or to Montanus, Praxeas, Noëtus, and other innovators: but this very chafing enhanced the value of the decision when at length it came, and caused it to be received with more heartfelt satisfaction.

*Fabian Policy.*

*Discipline lenient.*

*Question of the Day.*

In questions of discipline, the same practical turn of mind disposed the mass of the Roman Clergy to an indulgent course and the stricter party, more or less imbued with Montanistic or Encratite notions, fell into the position of a disappointed faction. The vilest sinners, it was complained, might hope for "the Church's peace." The treatment of backsliders, in fact, was becoming the great question of the day. Many of the Bishops, especially in North Africa,[16] were disposed to shut the door of forgiveness, at least against adulterers and other scandalous offenders. But Zephyrinus and Callistus offered pardon to all. Their facility in this respect, and their readiness to admit to communion, seemed hardly to fall short of that of the Elxaite sect, —a sort of Anabaptists then flourishing in Rome,[17] who offered a new immersion to all who professed repentance, and promised in each immersion a plenary absolution of bygone sins. Between the captivating laxity of heretics of this kind, and the plausible severity of such men as Hippolytus, it was by no means easy to steer a just middle course.

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[14] *De Pudicitia*, 21, 22; which invectives, however, may have been aimed at the Bishops generally, and not (as sometimes thought) at Zephyrinus in particular.

[15] Before Tertullian framed a religious language for the West, it was not easy to express in Latin the nicer points of the Greek theology.

[16] So says S. Cyprian, *Epistol.* lv. *ad Antonianum;* his own practice,

*Extreme Positions.*

The Decian persecution, and the quarrels about discipline that sprang from it, made an epoch, as we have seen, in the history of North Africa: it had an equal influence upon the development and the destinies of the Roman Church.

*Decian Epoch.*

In both Churches there was a chronic opposition to the ruling party. In Carthage, this opposition maintained a doctrine of almost indiscriminate indulgence, against the severer views of S. Cyprian. In Rome, it appeared, as already stated, under an opposite guise. But as the Carthaginian Novatus and the Roman Novatianus played into each other's hands, and united on a ground of inexorable severity to the lapsed, so Cyprian and Cornelius stood together on that middle ground of rigor tempered by a moderate use of the power of indulgence, which became, after many struggles, the general policy of the Church. This league between the two great leaders of Western Christianity was doubtless beneficial to them both. The bias towards austerity, which Cyprian had inherited from his master Tertullian, and that towards laxity which characterized the Clergy of the Roman Church, were moderated to a wise and religious mean.

*Rome and Carthage.*

*Cyprian and Cornelius.*

*Via Media.*

The accession of Stephen, a period to which we have been

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however, was *after the full term of penance, public confession being made,* to admit all offenders to communion.

[17] See Book II. ch. vii.

conducted by the thread of African Church History, interrupted this happy concord between the two Churches, and added another to the many painful disputes by which Christendom was already so scandalously divided.

*Stephen,* A.D. 253.

It was the question of the validity of baptism administered by heretics. Cyprian took the ground previously maintained by the Council under Agrippinus, that as the Church alone has authority to baptize, no true baptism could be given out of the Church pale. Stephen commanded that converts from all sects should be received, as the sects received from one another, by penance only, with the imposition of hands.[18] The Name of Christ, he argued, was powerful enough to give validity to any baptism in which it was invoked. In addition to this he pleaded the authority of custom. It is probable enough that the custom of many Churches, and perhaps of a majority of them, was such as he alleged. But when he proceeded, in the spirit of his predecessor, Victor, to make that custom a universal law, neither North Africa nor the East was prepared to accede to any such pretensions. Supported by Alexandria;[19] by a letter from Firmilianus, the learned Bishop of Cappadocian Cæsarea, written in behalf of many other Eastern prelates; and by the harmonious action

*Baptism by Heretics.*

*Violence of Stephen.*

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[18] Cyprian. *Epist.* 73, Pariss. "On this question there were three views in the early Church: (1) that of the early African Church and of Asia Minor, in the time of Firmilian, which rejected *all* baptism out of the Church, schismatical as well as heretical; (2) that of the Greek Church generally, which accepted schismatical but rejected heretical baptism; (3) that first mentioned by Stephen, Bishop of Rome, who accepted all baptism, even of heretics, which had been given in the Name of the Trinity." See a learned note to the *Oxford translation of Tertullian*, vol. i. p. 280. It has been much disputed, however, whether Stephen did not take the position that the Name of Christ, without any mention of the other Persons of the Trinity, was enough for a valid baptism. S. Cyprian's language *seems* to say as much: but, on the other hand, the fact that *he does not argue against* such an extreme position, is almost fatal to the supposition that Stephen really held it.

[19] Dionysius of Alexandria is thought by some to have agreed with Stephen on the abstract question; but considered it a matter in which difference of opinion ought to be allowed. See Neale's *Holy Eastern Church.*

of three Councils of Carthage, in the last of which eighty-seven Bishops were present: Cyprian made light of the Roman custom, and set at naught the excommunications of Stephen. Indeed, the latter, on account of his violence, was regarded by many as having cut himself off from the unity of the Church.[20]

*Cyprian's Course.*

In all this Cyprian was thoroughly consistent. While an ardent advocate of episcopal authority, and willing to pay a certain deference to the Roman See, he always regarded that authority as limited by the rights of the People on the one side, and by the essential equality of Bishops on the other. In local affairs, a Bishop could do nothing without the concurrence of the local Church; in matters of general concernment, nothing without the consent of his peers and colleagues.[21] The conduct of Stephen, in endeavoring to make the custom of one Church a law for all, was diametrically opposed to this wholesome rule.

*His Principle of Action.*

The baptismal controversy, like that concerning Easter, seems to have remained unsettled till the Council of Nicæa. It made no schism, however, and the violence with which it was conducted speedily abated.

*Question when settled.*

Two other cases that occurred during the pontificate of Stephen, served to bring out more distinctly still the mutual relations of the Bishops.

*Relations of Bishops.*

Martianus, Bishop of Arles, a flourishing Church in Southern Gaul, having fallen into Novatian errors, Faustinus, Bishop of Lyons, and sundry others in the same Province, wrote repeatedly both to Cyprian and Stephen, soliciting their intervention for the relief of the afflicted Church. Moved by their entreaties, Cyprian writes to Stephen on the subject.[22] "It devolves upon us," says he, "to extend

*Case of Martianus.*

*Cyprian's Letter.*

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[20] See Epistle of Firmilianus, *Cyprian. Op.*

[21] The term "Brother" or "Colleague," was the ordinary style of Bishops in addressing one another. The term "Papa," "Pope," "Father," was applied equally to all Bishops by their inferiors in grade,

[22] S. Cyprian. *Epis.* lxvi. Pariss. I quote the substance only of this letter.

both *counsel and help* in such emergencies. . . . For this very purpose the Bishops, though one in the bonds of unity and concord, are *a numerous body;* that if one of our Colleagues should play the wolf and begin to scatter the flock, the others may come up to the rescue, like faithful shepherds, and gather the Lord's sheep into the fold. There is more than one haven provided for the storm-tossed mariner, . . . more than one inn for the traveller waylaid by thieves. . . . Where one refuge fails, another, the *nearest at hand*, should be promptly opened. . . . It behooves *thee*, therefore, brother well-beloved, to send most ample instructions to our brother Bishops in Gaul, . . . and to the people of Arles, that Martianus be deposed and another chosen in his stead." In thus laying the chief share of the common burden upon Stephen, Cyprian was obviously influenced by the greater nearness of the latter to the scene of action.

*Why more than one Bishop.*

*Appeal to the nearest.*

The second case was somewhat different in character. The Churches of Leon and Astorga in Spain had in due form procured the deposition of their Bishops, Basilides and Martialis, convicted of apostasy in the Decian persecution; and two other Bishops, Felix and Sabinus, had been appointed in their place. But Basilides repaired to Rome and insinuated himself into the good graces of Stephen. The Spaniards, hearing that an effort would be made to bring about his reinstatement, consulted Cyprian and the North African Church on the course to be pursued. The answer is in the name of an African Synod.[23] It commends the conduct of the Spaniards; shows the deposition of the two Bishops to have been in all points righteous and canonical; reflects obliquely upon Stephen; and exhorts the Churches to stand firm against any effort to reverse their decision, from whatever quarter it might come. "By all means let the divine and apostolic custom be observed, which prevails among us and among almost all the provinces of the

*Case of Basilides and Martialis.*

*Cyprian consulted.*

*His Answer.*

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[23] *Epistol.* lxvii.

*Mode of electing Bishops.*

*Election not to be annulled.*

world. If a prelate is to be appointed, let the neighboring Bishops of the Province come together in presence of the people over whom he is to be ordained, and let the Bishop be chosen by the people present,[24] who are thoroughly acquainted with his life and character. This you have done in the ordination of Sabinus, our Colleague. By the suffrage of the whole brotherhood, and by the judgment of the Bishops assembled, the Bishopric was conferred upon him, and hands were laid upon him in place of Basilides. Such an ordination cannot be disannulled. . . . Be not troubled, therefore, even though *some of our Colleagues* should despise the discipline of the Church, and make common cause with Martialis and Basilides; . . . knowing that he who thus acts falls under the Divine censure expressed in the Psalm, 'When thou sawest a thief thou consentedst unto him, and hast been partaker with the adulterers.' "

*Stephen Rebuked.*

In this way Cyprian rebuked the arbitrary spirit of Stephen, as Irenæus had rebuked that of his predecessor, Victor.

*Valerian's Persecution.* A.D. 257–261.

*Stephen and Sixtus suffer,* A.D. 257–258.

The persecution that soon broke out under the Emperor Valerian was aimed especially at the leaders of the Church. According to the imperial edict, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons were to be put to death by the sword; Senators and Knights were to lose their dignity and property; women of condition were to be banished; and Christians in the service of the court were to be sent in chains to labor on the public works.[25] The object was to deprive the Church of Clergy, and to stop the spread of Christianity among the higher classes. Stephen was among the first that suffered; being put to death, it is said, while celebrating the Service in one of the crypts of the catacombs.[26] Sixtus, his successor, obtained the same honor. Thus, within a period of about eight years, five Roman Bishops were enrolled among the Martyrs. Cyprian in North Africa, and Dionysius in Egypt, were at first banished; but this being found insufficient, the former of these prelates was summoned again into the presence of the Proconsul, and was sentenced to death. He answered simply, and with dignity, "God be thanked." In the carrying out of the sentence there was great publicity, and much of the pomp and show of a state execution.[27]

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[24] Or, *plebe præsente—in presence of the people*—it *may* mean; though the context, it seems to me, favors the translation I have given.

[25] S. Cyprian. *Epistol.* lxxxi. Pariss.

[26] Pagi, *Breviarium PP. R. Martyrolog. Roman.*

*Cyprian*, A.D. 258.

On the restoration of peace, after the disastrous expedition against the Persians in which Valerian was made prisoner,[28] the stream of Church life flowed more tranquilly for awhile, if not more healthily. In Africa, especially, few names of any note present themselves till the close of the century. In Rome, the long and prosperous pontificate of Dionysius was marked by two events of considerable importance.

*Dionysius of Rome*, A.D. 259-269.

The Clergy of Pentapolis in Egypt addressed a complaint to the Roman Bishop against his famous namesake, their own spiritual head, Dionysius of Alexandria. In the course of a controversy with the Sabellians who had obtained a foothold in that region, he had employed arguments and analogies which seemed to make the Son inferior in substance to the Father. A Council was held at Rome, and explanations were called for.[29] The Alexandrian Bishop satisfactorily cleared himself in an Apology of four Books, and the matter was soon dropped.

*Complaint against Dionysius of Alexandria.*

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[27] Pontius, *Vit. Cypr.; Passio Cyprian.* S. Cyprian, *Epistol.* lxxvi–lxxxii.

[28] After being treated with every indignity by the Persian king, Valerian was flayed alive.

[29] Dionysius of Rome was an able theologian; and came nearer, perhaps, than any divine of that age to the exact definitions of the Nicene period. See fragments of his writings in Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* iii. For the expressions that brought Dionysius of Alexandria into trouble, see ch. vi. of this Book. It would seem that the Roman Church, having been compelled to condemn the extremes of Theodotus on the one hand, and of the Patripassians on the other, and having also rejected the more subtle error of subordinationism (or tritheism) as held by Hippolytus, had practically attained to the exact position of the Nicene period in advance of most Churches.

*Bishops a Guard upon one another.*

Such transactions were a necessary fruit of the unity of the Episcopate,[30] a practical answer to the question, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* Bishops had not only to watch their several flocks, but to keep an eye on one another. When the conduct, therefore, of any particular prelate was impugned, the first step would be a reference of the case to some distinguished colleague or near neighbor; and if this failed, a Council, as general as possible, would have to be assembled. Nothing could be more natural than such a mode of proceeding. As it was always easy, however, to run to one Bishop, but extremely difficult to bring about a concurrent action of many, it tended, on the whole, to the aggrandizement of the greater Sees; and especially, of course, to that of the See of Rome.

*A Second Case.*

A second case, under the same pontificate, foreshadowed another fruitful source of increase to Roman prerogative.

*Referred to the Italian Bishops.* A.D. 272.

*Centralization tendency.*

On the condemnation of Paul of Samosata by the Council in Antioch,[31] a question arose between the faction that still adhered to him and the party of Domnus his successor, as to the possession of Church property in that important See. It was referred to the Emperor Aurelian. He again committed it for decision to Dionysius and the Italian Bishops. This course, perfectly natural and equitable under all the circumstances, was the initiative of a policy, which, if Rome had continued to be the sole seat of empire, might have anticipated by some centuries the time of a great monarchy in the Church, by making the Roman Bishop the spiritual counterpart of the Emperor. Providentially the empire became divided as soon as it became Christian. Constantinople shared with Rome the imperial favor, and the centralizing drift was in part at least diverted.

In the meantime, there was little in the Roman Church of the third century, at least in point of numbers or of external show, to indicate the greatness it was destined ultimately to achieve.[32] After two hundred years of daily growth, the Roman Bishop could boast a clerical staff of forty-six Presbyters, seven Deacons, seven Subdeacons, forty-two Alcolyths, and fifty-two Exorcists: and during the whole of the third century the number of Presbyters ordained averaged less than two a year.[33] If the people, therefore, were to the priests according to any modern ratio, their whole number could hardly have been more than fifty thousand. This was but a small proportion of a population which, at a moderate estimate, must have numbered considerably more than a million. It was found chiefly, moreover, among the lower, or perhaps the intelligent middle, and foreign classes.[34] The Gospel, it is true, had

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[30] We have already seen instances of such appeals to S. Cyprian. Another similar case will appear in connection with Paul of Samosata. For appeals to Alexandria, see Neale's *Holy E. Church*, Book I. § 5.

[31] See chap. v. of this Book.

*Greatness of the Roman Church.*

*Number of Christians.*

*Social Position.*

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[32] S. Cyprian declares, however, that the Emperor Decius could better brook a competitor in his throne, than a Bishop in his metropolis: a feeling that arose probably from the exaggeration of hatred, rather than from any sense of danger to his power.

[33] See Pagi, *Breviarium PP. R.* who gives the ordinations of each reign in about the proportion mentioned. Calculations made from the vast extent of the Catacombs have led to the supposition of a much larger number of believers. But these calculations involve so many *hypotheses*, and lead to such extravagant results, that I cannot bring myself to allow them much weight. The number of Clergy and the number of Churches in Rome (about forty towards the end of the century) are the most reliable data. See Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs*, and Northcote's *Roman Catacombs*. The basis of the calculations from the Catacombs is given concisely in Rawlinson's *Historical Evidences*, note xxxix. to lecture viii.

[34] *Among the mere refuse of the earth*, a heathen is made to say in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix. This writer, probably an African by birth, is among the most graphic and lively of the Apologists. He wrote early in the century. That there must have been a fair proportion of intelligent people among the Christians is proved by the general character of the *writings* of the period; writings which in style and matter are far above the range of that kind of literature that would suit a mere rabble. Such expressions as "refuse of the earth," would be applied by a proud Roman to any foreigner, however intelligent. S. Paul himself was doubtless so regarded by many. See Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*, Book II. ch. ix. and Neander's *Ch. History.*

been heard within the walls of the palace; it had invaded the philosophic schools; it had made converts of senatorial rank; and in two or three cases a fitful gleam of imperial favor had awakened expectations not yet to be fulfilled. These, however, were as yet but exceptional cases. Heathenism still presented to the eye an almost unbroken front.

*Heathen Point of View.*

*Peculiar Habits.*

*Heathen Slanders.*

To a stranger visiting Rome—gazing with awe upon the magnificence of its palaces, hippodromes, theatres, baths, porticos, and temples; or mingling with the myriads of idolaters of every clime and rite who thronged these gorgeous centres of universal concourse,—the existence of Christianity might have been for a long time unnoticed, or only noticed as a fact of little significance to a philosophic mind.[35] If an early riser, indeed, he might have seen a few groups of men and women before the day dawned, stealing hurriedly to and fro in some obscure suburb. If a curious inquirer, he might have learned from some haughty Roman that these *Antelucani*, "haters of the light,[36] haters of the gods, addicted to a skulking superstition utterly foreign to Roman habits," were distinguished from other strange sects by the name of Christians. But if he wished to know more of them, he could learn it only from themselves. With no temples, no altars of any note,[37] and as was commonly reported no God, they celebrated their *sacra peregrina* under an impenetrable veil of mystery. Some said they met together at night for Thyestean repasts; that they worshipped an ass's head; that they practised the most abominable obscenities. Others affirmed, on the contrary, that with the exception of their strange, unsocial, and unpatriotic ways, no harm of any sort could be alleged against them. One thing certain was, that little was seen of them on the sunny side of life; little amid the pride and pomp of the great Roman world.[38] The mistress of the nations sat on a dazzling throne of universal dominion. Christianity seemed but the most sullen and intractable of the many slaves[39] that crouched at her imperial feet.

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[35] The silence of eminent heathen writers, on the subject of Christianity, is made much of by Gibbon. Such silence, however, was probably an affectation; or, if real, it only shows how blind the wisest men are to things going on around them.

[36] Latebrosa et lucifuga natio, etc., etc. Minucii. Fel. *Octavius.*

[37] Minuc. Fel. *Oct.* That is, with none of sufficient splendor to attract a heathen eye. In the times of the Emperor Severus, edifices of greater pretensions began to be reared in the principal cities. On this subject, see Prof. Blunt's *Lectures on the First Three Centuries.*

*Sobriety of the Christians.*

Such was Christianity as seen from a secular point of view. But the Christians, the meanwhile, lived in a world of their own. While heathen Rome was still rearing her proud fanes in the upper air, bewitching idolatrous crowds with a glittering mockery of greatness, Christian Rome was delving deep for her foundations in the bowels of the earth.[40] Condemned to seek refuge among the dead, she found in death itself a source of inspiration. While the King of terrors mowed the heathen down like grass—a little ashes in an urn by the roadside being the fit symbol of their ephemeral existence—his presence was welcomed among the Christians as adding new recruits to their spiritual muster-roll, swelling the mighty host of invisible defenders, and increasing the volume and the efficacy of that all-prevailing prayer, Thy kingdom come. The catacombs,[41] in fact, were the temples, the altars, it might even be said the literature and theology, of the primitive Roman Church.

*Christian Point of View.*

*Catacombs.*

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[38] Non spectacula visitis, non pompis interestis, etc. Min. Fel. *Octavius.*

[39] Each nation had its own particular god; but Rome, the universal and eternal, had conquered all gods, and had a place for all. This claim to a spurious *Catholicty* is finely stated in the *Octavius.*

[40] Impia Roma suis scrutata est molibus astra:
Scrutata est terrae viscera Roma pia.
—*In Subterran. Rom.* Anonymi.

[41] Aringhi, *Roma Subterranea.* The magnificent work of Perret brings the subject down to the more recent discoveries: *Catecombes de Rome*, par Louis Perret: Paris, 1855. In this splendid work the plates are very exact, and wonderfully suggestive. Christian Catacombs have been found also in Naples, Syracuse, Malta, etc. See Gieseler, § 70, n. 11. Northcote's *Roman Catacombs* (London, 1857) is one of the latest works on the subject.

*Places of Burial.*

*Places of Worship.*

*Tragic Element.*

Resorted to at first as inviolable places of sepulture, afterwards as convenient hiding-holes from constantly recurring persecution,[42] these regions of the dead became the living heart of a most earnest faith; the very shrine of the hallowed and stirring associations which the Resurrection of the dead, the Communion of saints, and the nearness of the Appearing of the King of Glory, could never fail to inspire. They were *κοιμητήρια,—dormitories* of those who slept in Christ; *areæ,*—sacred threshing-floors, in which the good grain was separated from the chaff, and garnered up for future seed-times and harvests; *concilia martyrum,*—where the living martyrs and the dead could meet in conference, as it were, and take sweet counsel together.[43] Nor was a tragic element wanting, to give force and depth to suggestions of this kind. Sometimes the myrmidons of power, having hunted the faithful from the daylight, would venture down in hot pursuit of them to their subterranean retreats. A Bishop would be torn from the altar[44] and ruthlessly despatched. A knot of worshippers would be slaughtered amid their sacred rites, or walled up to perish of speedy suffocation. All who suffered thus, lived, in the faith of the survivors, on a glorious equality. The infant martyr and the hoary-headed Bishop alike slept in Christ, alike awaited His appearing. The same simple inscription, In Pace,[45] was a sufficient record of them both. Thus the *inania regna*, the mere phantom realms of Dis as heathendom regarded them, became to Christian faith the most living and most real of all commonwealths. Persecution gave intensity to this feeling. The catacombs were its expression. Fired with this belief, the Christians closed their eyes to their own apparent inferiority; knowing that at any moment, suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, the plant growing underground might rise and come forth victoriously to the light of day.

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[42] "Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars, and his body rests in this tomb. He ended his life under the Emperor Antoninus, who, when he saw himself much surpassed in conferring benefits, returned hatred for kindness. For when he was bending the knee to offer the sacrifice of prayer to the true God, he was led away to punishment. *O what times!*" Inscription, translated in Maitland's *Church in the Catacombs.*

[43] The custom of worshipping in cemeteries, of celebrating the *natalitia* of the martyrs about their tombs, and especially of feasting or worshipping in such places by night, proved also a source of superstitions and abuses. The great care of the Christians in burying their dead began to degenerate, before the end of the third century, into a fondness for relics. See Gieseler, § 70. Felix, Bishop of Rome after Dionysius, is said, in the *Liber Pontificales,* to have first introduced the custom of celebrating the Eucharist over the tombs of the martyrs. Night-worship in cemeteries gave occasion to the 34th Canon of the Council of Elvira, which forbids candles to be used in those places, "lest the spirits of the Saints should be disquieted." See Bingham's *Antiquities,* xxiii. iii. 16 and 17; xx. vii. 10; viii. i. 9; etc., etc.

[44] This is said to have been the end of Stephen: *S. Stephan. Acta* apud Surium, August 2; *Martyrolog. Roman.*

*Earnest Faith.*

In this spirit and with this faith, the Roman Church acted as if the great Babylon were already given to it in possession. Its seven Deacons, assisted by seven Subdeacons, administered the charities of the Church, and had charge of the poor in the fourteen *Regiones* into which the city was divided. The Presbyters, assisted by the Acolyths, labored in the Word and the Sacraments. The large number of Exorcists sprang from a deep consciousness of a warfare with more than flesh and blood,—a vivid belief in the near presence and malignity of demoniacal possession. Over all the Bishop was supreme; the foremost leader and example in times of peace, the most prominent victim in the day of persecution.[46] There was little attention paid to preaching, in the modern sense of the word. The Church services, which at first were probably in Greek, were, as the Latin ele-

*Working System of the Church.*

*Preaching.*

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[45] Or, VIBAS IN PACE. The earliest inscriptions are the most simple:—"Dormit," "quiescit," "depositus est," and the like; the formula *in pace*, however, almost always being added.

[46] There is no good reason to doubt that in the third century Callistus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Anterus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephen, and Sixtus, successively exchanged the mitre for the Martyr's crown; five of them within the space of about eight years. See Pagi, *Breviar. PP. R.* The testimony of the Catacombs has made this fact more certain.

ment increased,[47] translated into the language understood by the people, and developed into a minute and elaborate system of instruction. Beyond this, teaching seems to have taken the familiar, expository, conversational form. *In publicum muta, in angulis garrula*, as the heathen expressed it, the Church addressed herself to individuals rather than to crowds; so that for more than three centuries pulpit eloquence was almost unknown.[48] But the business of the Church seems to have been admirably managed. The paternal element had not swallowed up the fraternal. The People took a decided interest in all affairs: and occasionally, through those popular heroes the Martyrs and Confessors, they exerted an undue and dangerous influence. Hence the exuberance of Church life broke out frequently into faction, and once into a formidable schism. But there were plenty of legitimate channels for popular zeal. Some fifteen hundred poor, besides widows and virgins,[49] were supported by the voluntary contributions of the faithful. So lavish was the bounty thus diffused, that it created among the heathen suspicions of great stores of hidden wealth. In the reign of Valerian, Archdeacon Laurentius was summoned and interrogated on the subject.[50] He promised, if one day were granted, to reveal the Church's treasures. He redeemed his pledge, having taken care in the meantime to sell the church-plate and give the proceeds to the poor, by bringing a great crowd of these living "jewels" into the presence of the astonished and

*Public Services.*

*Popular Element.*

*Charities.*

*Deacon Laurentius.*

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[47] In the Catacombs Greek inscriptions abound; and sometimes even the Latin inscriptions are graven in Greek characters.

[48] Sozomen (*Eccl. H.* vii. 19) mentions it at a peculiarity of Rome that there was no teaching in the Church. See Milman's *Lat. Christianity.* Minucius Felix explains, that the Christians would have been ready enough to discourse in public, if they had been allowed.

[49] Euseb. vi. 43.

[50] Three days before, his Bishop, Sixtus (or Xystus), had been borne to execution. Laurentius followed him in tears, saying, "Whither goest thou, father, without thy son?" To which the Bishop answered, "Thou shalt follow me in three days!"

angry judge. For this he was slowly broiled to death on a heated iron grate, and became the most popular of Roman martyrs. But it was not to the poor of Rome merely that the bounty of the Church was extended. Early in the second century Dionysius of Corinth had reason to laud the Christian sympathy of Rome.[51] In the Decian persecution the tide of liberality rolls back in fervid acknowledgments from the brethren of Arabia and Syria.[52] Somewhat later, Dionysius sends a ransom for the Cappadocian Christians carried into captivity by the Gothic invaders of Asia Minor. Thus early Rome deemed it more blessed to give than to receive. Her well ordered charities, even more than her consistent policy, were laying the foundations of that power over the hearts of men which later Rome afterwards so grievously abused.

*Bounties to other Churches.*

The temporary outbreak against the Christians towards the end of Aurelian's reign, and the more systematic persecution under the Emperors Diocletian and Maximian, commonly called the tenth, added many names to the roll of Martyrs, and raised up some vigorous defenders of Christianity: among others two African rhetoricians, Arnobius[53] and Lactantius. In the latter of these persecutions the rancor of the heathen seems to have exhausted itself. The world was growing sick of its own atrocities. When Constantine entered Rome a victor,[54] his rival Maxentius having perished in battle under the walls of the city, and when the long-hated Cross[55] was publicly set up in triumph, the mighty revolution seems hardly to

*Persecutions,* A.D. 274, 303.

*Arnobius, Lactantius.*

*Trophy of the Cross.*

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[51] Euseb. iv. 23.

[52] Euseb. vii. 5.

[53] Arnobius, a heathen rhetorician, is said to have been converted by a dream. He wrote a work in seven Books on the vanity of idols, and the superstitions of the Gentiles. He also exploded the slanders so industriously circulated against the Christians. Hieronymus, *in Addit. ad Chronic. Euseb.* For Lactantius, see note to ch. ix. of this Book.

[54] See ch ix. of this Book.

[55] The following is the inscription: Hoc salutari signo, vero fortitudinis indicio, civitatem vestram tyrannidis jugo liberavi, et S. P. Q. R. in libertatem vindicans, pristinæ amplitudini splendorique restitui. Euseb. *Life of Constantine,* i. 31.

have excited a murmur among the body of the people. Yet it cannot be supposed that the number of believers had much increased during the times of the persecutors. It was rather that heathenism had become unnerved. Its strength had been quietly sapped by the pervading pressure of the Truth. Accordingly, when the time was fully come, its ramparts crumbled and fell; sinking and disappearing without apparent cause, as the walls of Jericho sank before the persistent faith of the chosen people.

*Heathenism exhausted.*

But the boon of external peace was far from bringing with it a corresponding freedom from internal feuds. The persecution had created a new sore, by exciting a bitter feeling against the *traditores:* persons, that is, who under fear of death had betrayed sacred books or vessels to the imperial satellites. The victory, therefore, was hardly yet achieved, when the elements of faction, which had so often appeared before in Italy and North Africa, came suddenly to a head once more in the famous schism of the Donatists.

*New Troubles.*

It was a dispute as to the succession of the See of Carthage.[56] Cæcilianus had been elected against the intrigues of two competitors, Botrus and Celeusius; but, unfortunately, owing to these intrigues, the Numidian Bishops did not assist at the consecration. The disappointed party rallied a formidable opposition. Lucilla, a lady of influence and wealth, with certain of the *seniores populi,* got together a Council of seventy Numidian Bishops, who condemned Cæcilianus on two charges. He had been ordained by a *traditor,* it was said,—namely, by Felix, Bishop of Aptunga; he had forbidden food to be carried to some of the Confessors in prison. It is probable enough that he had opposed the extravagant devotion paid to these popular idols.[57]

DONATIST SCHISM, A.D. 311.

*Two Charges against Cæcilianus,* A.D. 312.

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[56] S. Optati, *De Schismate Donatist.* Ed. Dupin.

[57] Optatus says that "Lucilla, just before the persecution, was sharply corrected by Cæcilianus, then Archdeacon, because in receiving the Sacrament she kept *kissing a bone of some Martyr or other,* as if she preferred that to he Sacred Feast." *De Sch. Don.* i. 16.

On these grounds he was condemned by the Council; and Majorinus, a creature of Lucilla, was made Bishop in his stead. The consecrator, in this instance, being a certain Donatus Bishop of Casæ Nigræ in Numidia, the Schism received its name from him, and its followers were called Donatists or *pars Donati*. The name was confirmed to them by the rise of a second Donatus,[58] whose ability and zeal made him afterwards a prominent leader of the sect.

*Donatus.*

The question was submitted, on their part, to the Emperor Constantine,—the first instance of the kind recorded in Church history; and at his instance three Bishops of Gaul met in Council with Melchiades the Roman prelate, and fifteen Italians, to put an end to the dispute. Cæcilianus was acknowledged, and the Donatists were condemned. The latter, being similarly rejected afterwards at Arles[59] and other places,[60] broke off entirely from the communion of the Church. Regarding the Catholics as corrupt, apostate, and defiled by communion with *traditores*, they would admit neither their baptism, ordination, nor religious vows, as of any validity whatsoever.

*Appeal to Constantine,* A.D. 313.

*Donatists condemned.* A.D. 314-316.

The movement was, in fact, one of the many bitter fruits of that root of bitterness, which under the successive forms of Judaic concisionism, philosophic *encrateia*, Phrygian enthusiasm, Novatian rigor, and in short phariseeism in general, had followed pace by pace the progress of the Truth, and had cast a baleful shadow upon all its triumphs. Africa had suffered more from it than any other portion of the Church.

*Nature of the Heresy.*

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[58] S. Augustin. *De Hæres.* 69.

[59] At Arles, Bishops were present from Gaul, Italy, Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, and North Africa, to the number, it is said, of two hundred—S. Augustin. *Contra Epistol. Parmeniani*, v. 5—among whom were three British Bishops: Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, Adelfius of Lincoln See Bingham, ix. vi. 20.

[60] Appealing from the Synod at Arles to the Emperor, they were condemned again at Milan; after which they conducted themselves with greater violence.

*Council of Elvira.*

*Struggle of the Weak against the Strong.*

But it was rife everywhere. The Council of Eliberis[61] or Elvira in Spain, holden soon after the outbreak of the Dioclesian persecution, is redolent of its spirit. The attempt on the part of a few to bind their own virtues on the consciences of all, is popular with the crowd, and even commends itself to minds of a higher order. It is honorable to the great body of the Clergy of the early Church, that resistance to the encroachments of this spirit was steadfastly maintained by them. They felt a responsibility for the weaker members of the flock, which brought them often into conflict with the hard and narrow notions of influential laymen, especially of the class of Confessors. While they honored the martyr-spirit, they were forced to put a check upon the extravagances which so frequently flowed from such honor. Hence the charge of starving the Confessors brought against Cæcilianus. Hence the unpopularity of his sober predecessor Mensurius;[62] of whom we learn that, owing to the number of Martyrs, he excluded from the List the names of those who had put themselves in the way of persecution. Hence, in short, a struggle so close, so deadly, so confused at times, that it is difficult in many cases to distinguish which side of the line the

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[61] In this austere Council, Hosius of Cordova was present, afterwards famous in connection with the Arian controversy. It forbade absolution to the lapsed even at the point of death, prohibited the Clergy, even Subdeacons, from the use of marriage; ordered double fasts for every month except July and August, etc., etc. It was, in fact, more like a Novatian than a Catholic Council. Nineteen Bishops and twenty-six Priests were present.

[62] He saved the sacred Books by a stratagem: carrying them off and hiding them, he put in their place in the Church a collection of heretical writings. When the officers came in quest of them, therefore, he readily surrendered *all that could be found in the Church.* The trick was afterwards revealed to the Proconsul, who summoned Mensurius into his presence. The latter entrusted the sacred treasures to some of the *Seniores*, but, fearing that he might not return home again, took the precaution to make out a list of them, and committed it to the charge of an elderly woman. The *Seniores* proved false to their trust; but the list remained, and the memory of Mensurius was vindicated. S. Optat. *De Schism. Donat.*

Church occupied ; and in which truth itself seemed more or less divided.

*Religious Wars.*

However this may be, Donatism continued for three centuries to devastate the African Church. Constantine endeavored to conciliate it by lenient measures. But it claimed everything, and was averse to peace. Among the half-converted savages of the rural districts it became an uncontrollable frenzy, defying the utmost force of the civil power to suppress it, and involving Catholics and schismatics alike in the complicated horrors of civil and religious wars.[63] It was finally extinguished, only through the downfall of African Christianity itself, by the overrunning floods of Vandal and Saracen invasion.

*Rome the Standard-bearer of Orthodoxy.*

The long-continued struggle with these uncompromising and bitter heretics strengthened the union that existed between the daughter Church of Carthage and her Roman mother; and placed the latter more decidedly than ever at the head of the cause, not only of Italian but of North African orthodoxy. Indeed, throughout the West, to be in communion with Rome was to hate Novatianism, to abhor the Donatists. In proportion, therefore, to the length and bitterness of the war with these rigid and powerful sects, the ties that bound the provincial Churches to the great metropolitan standard-bearer became day by day more numerous and more strong.

*Claim to the Chair of S. Peter.*

And the Roman Church was the more decidedly committed to this position from the fact that the Donatists, claiming to be exclusively the Body of Christ, established an Episcopal succession of their own in the imperial city. This line of Bishops ran on till the times of Pope Siricius, and gave occasion to the orthodox to dwell more than had previously been the case upon the succession from S. Peter, as a test of the Catholic Church,[64]—of the Catholic Church, namely, in the city of Rome. The constant repetition of this argument, legitimate enough in the question between the two lines of Bishops in Rome and Carthage, had the effect nevertheless of unduly exalting the position of the great Western See, and in course of time opened the way for encroachments upon the rights of other Churches. In this way the Donatist Schism became a most important element in the History of the Latin Church.

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[63] For a vivid account of the *Circumcelliones*, see Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*.

[64] S Optat. *De Schism. Donat.* lib. ii. 2. The Donatists, he argues, could count their Bishops back through Macrobius, Encolpius, Bonifacius, to Victor,

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHURCH AND SCHOOL OF ANTIOCH.

*The East Theological.*

WHILE the West was thus absorbed in questions of discipline or of practical religious life, the more speculative East was intent on theology proper; Antioch and Alexandria continuing to be the centres of activity in this direction.

*Theophilus, A.D. 181.*

Antioch, the head of the Syrian Churches, with more or less of a patriarchal influence over Cilicia, Phœnicia, Comagene, Osrhoëne, and Mesopotamia,[1] had shared very largely in that general awakening of thought which distinguished the latter half of the second century. Theophilus, the sixth Bishop in descent from the Apostles, a convert from heathen philosophy, was among the foremost in this respect. He wrote against Marcion, Hermogenes, and other heretics; left an Apology in three Books, noted for elegance of style; and was among the first to introduce the word *Trias* or *Trinity* into common use among theological writers.[2]

*Trias or Trinitas.*

who was sent from Africa to Rome in the time of Constantine: the Roman Bishops could trace back their line to S. Peter and S. Paul. It was obvious, therefore, that the claim which the Donatists made to the See of Peter had no historic foundation.

[1] See Bingham's *Antiquities*, ix. ii. 9.

[2] The three Persons of the Trinity he distinguished as *God, the Word, Wisdom.*

At this period discussions with heretics, both oral and in writing, employed much of the time and demanded all the skill of the chief pastors of the Church. Such discussions necessarily led to the study of philosophy and dialectics, and to a more critical and searching examination of the sacred text.

*Babylas a Martyr,* A.D. 250.

S. Babylas,[3] the twelfth in the succession, distinguished himself as a bold and prudent leader during the temporary occupancy of Antioch by the Persian king Sapor; and was afterwards a Martyr in the Decian persecution. As he was led to execution, he lifted up his voice in a song of triumph, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me." Three youthful disciples suffered with him. As the officer was taking off their heads, the saint cried aloud, "Behold, I and the children which the Lord hath given me."

*Fabius.*

*Novatian condemned,* A.D. 252.

When the Novatian troubles broke out at Rome, Fabius, the immediate successor of Babylas, took part with the schismatics and summoned a Council, to which he invited also Dionysius of Alexandria. He died, however, before the Council could assemble; and when it finally came together, the cause of Novatian was condemned. Fabius was succeeded by Demetrianus, and Demetrianus by that arch-innovator in doctrine and in morals, Paul of Samosata.

*Paul of Samosata,* A.D. 262.

The latter was no sooner seated in the episcopal chair, than he began to give general offence. His pravity has been variously ascribed to a Judaizing leaven still working in the Syrian Church,[4] to intimacy with the new Platonists, who were then at the height of their celebrity or finally to his own ambitious and frivolous disposition. Much stress has been laid upon the last of these. Not content with the profound respect universally paid to the Clergy, he affected much of the state and assumed the airs of a man of the world, a philosopher, and *bel esprit.* He thus identified himself with a refined and intellectual but vainglorious circle, which flourished at that time in the luxurious capital of the East, cherished by the smiles of Zenobia, the renowned and brilliant queen of Palmyra. The famous Longinus was one of their great lights. With Christianity as a religion they had little to do; but for Christianity as a philosophic system, based upon writings remarkable for their sublimity and beauty, they could hardly fail to entertain a certain respect. To win such men, and to make Christian life and doctrine palatable to them, may possibly have been an object with such a man as Paul. But the bulk of believers were too sturdy and too real to feel much sympathy with such liberality. Paul became odious to his brethren in proportion as he commended himself to a more courtly circle.

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[3] Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. i.; S. Chrysost. lib. de S. Babyl.

[4] Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century*, chap. i. § i.

*Court of Zenobia.*

He was accused of pride, arrogance, luxury, and venality. The hymns commonly sung to Christ as God, and which had been all along a chief bulwark of the Creed, he declared to be mere novelties of the date of the Roman Bishop Victor,[5] and forbade them to be used in his Church any more. In their place he substituted verses of his own composition, sung with great *éclat* by a trained choir of women. He held, or acted as if he held, the office of *ducenarius*;[6] and delighted to be seen in the forum attended by a crowd, and seemingly absorbed in a multiplicity of business. In religious affairs also he affected much state; preached with vehement gesticulations; and encouraged the bad practice, afterwards shamefully prevalent in the Church, of applauding the eloquence of the preacher, instead of hearkening to his message in respectful silence. He connived at the abuse, on the part of the Clergy, of living on too familiar terms with adopted virgin "sisters"; and set a scandalous example in this respect. To crown all, he took care to lay people under so

*Special Charges against Paul.*

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[5] Compare Euseb. v. 28, and vii. 30.

[6] It is hard to say, from the letter of the Bishops (Euseb. vii. 30), whether he held such an office, or only affected the style of it. The office was named from the salary, viz., 200,000 *sestert.*

many obligations, or so to intimidate them by his threats and frowns, that hardly any one could be found to come forward as an accuser or witness against him

Heresy and Evil Living.

Such charges, in this and similar cases, may have arisen in part from theological resentment, and from the general prevalence in the Church of austere views. The earnestness with which they were urged, however, is an interesting fact, as showing that corruptness of living could not be dissociated as yet from corruptions in the Faith.

Error of Paul.

Humanitarianism.

The error of Paul, like that of Ebion, Theodotus, and Artemon, consisted in a denial of the personal preëxistence of Christ, and, of course, in a denial of the Trinity, except in such sense as could be reconciled with Neo-Platonic views. Jesus he believed to have been a mere man, though miraculously conceived and supernaturally favored. To this man, growing up in sinless perfection, the Divine Word or Reason became united. Jesus thus dwells in the Divine Wisdom, He is clothed with it, He participates in it. That *He is the Divine Wisdom* Paul was unwilling to confess. He believed in Him and adored Him as a sort of deified man.[7]

Appeal to the Bishops.

Alarmed by these novel views, which commended themselves both to the Judaizing and philosophizing circles of the court, and which seem to have been conveyed in the form of captious and sceptical inquiries rather than in clear definitions,[8] the Antiochean clergy acted on the principle of which so many precedents had already been afforded, and applied for relief to the neighboring Bishops. Dionysius of Alexandria, Hymenæus of Jerusalem, Firmilianus the learned prelate

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[7] The heresy of Paul is quite fully discussed in Mosheim's *Hist. Commentaries on the First Three Centuries*. See, also, Gieseler, *Eccl. Hist.* § 60, note 12.

[8] His *Ten Queries*, not particularly well answered by Dionysius of Alexandria (if the *Answer to the Ten Queries* be his), embrace most of the difficult passages of the New Testament, in which our Lord is spoken of according to His humanity. See Mansi, *Concil.*, *Council of Antioch*.

*Two Councils.*

of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, and other distinguished pastors, were written to and invited to intervene. Dionysius could not come to Antioch; but after a sharp correspondence with Paul,[9] wrote to the Church a letter condemnatory of him, purposely omitting the customary form of salutation to the Bishop. The other chief pastors assembled once and perhaps twice in Council; but, owing to the evasions of Paul and the moderate counsels of Firmilianus, were satisfied with vague promises of repentance and amendment.

*Third Council of Antioch,* A.D. 269.

*Death of Firmilian.*

*Malchion.*

*Paul's Error detected.*

The abuses and false teaching still going on, a third Council of the Church had to be assembled; on his way to which, Firmilianus, one of the worthiest and most respected of the prelates of his times, was taken suddenly ill and departed this life in peace. He was a disciple and warm friend of Origen; had taken part in a great Council at Iconium, in which Montanist baptism was rejected by the Bishops of Phrygia, Galatia, Cilicia, and Cappadocia; and, as we have seen, was a staunch supporter of Cyprian in his controversy with Stephen. It was owing to his high character rather than to the eminence of his See, that he exerted so great an influence in the matter of Paul. In his absence, Malchion, a Presbyter of Antioch, a sophist by education, and head of the Catechetical School, seems to have been the guiding and controlling spirit. Hitherto, Paul had been examined chiefly as to what he held, and by a skilful use of phrases, or by vague professions of belief in the Divinity of Christ, had managed to conceal his errors. Malchion questioned him more closely as to what he denied.[10] By this the heresy was uncovered. In an encyclical letter addressed "to Dionysius and

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[9] Without accepting the letters (given in Mansi, *Concilia*) as genuine, I cannot but believe there was some such correspondence. The assertion of the Council that Dionysius wrote without condescending to notice Paul, applies only to the letter laid before the Council.

[10] Such, at least, is the spirit of the questions given in Mansi, *Concilia*: *e. g.*, "non concedis filium unigenitum . . . in toto salvatore *ὀυσιῶθαι*," etc.

*Letter of the Council.*

*Paul and Domnus.*

Maximus,[11] and to all other fellow-ministers throughout the world, Bishops and Presbyters and Deacons, and to the whole Catholic Church throughout the world in all places under heaven;" and written in the name of "Helenus, Hymenæus, Theophilus, Theotecnus . . . and Malchion and Lucius, and others who are Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons, . . . together with the Churches of God:" the condemnation of Paul, with the appointment of Domnus in his stead, was formally promulged and commended to the faithful everywhere. "We have communicated this to you," is their language to the Roman Pontiff, "*that you may write and receive letters from him*" (namely, from Domnus, who had been elected in the place of Paul); "but the other (namely, Paul) may write to Artemas if he pleases, and those that think with Artemas may have communion with him."[12]

*Catholic Unity.*

*No Supreme Head.*

This transaction, so public, so formal, so deliberate, involving a cause and a person of the highest importance, participated in by the foremost prelates of the times, and unanimously concurred in by all the Churches, is a striking illustration of the Catholic unity of this period. It is obvious that this unity involved no supremacy of any particular See. The Council wrote to the Roman Bishop as to all other prelates and Churches, merely to inform him of what had been done, and to show him where he should extend the right hand of fellowship.

*Oneness in the Faith.*

It is an equally striking illustration of the firmness and decision with which the essentials of the Faith were held. So long as the question could be made to turn on a mere word—namely, on the force of the term *consubstantial*[13]—Paul was able by his sophistry to blind the eyes of his brethren. But when it came to the point of a simple affirmation or denial of the proper divinity of Christ, there was room for no further evasions. On that subject, at least, the mind of the Church was clear.

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[11] That is, Dionysius of Rome and Maximus of Alexandria, the latter having succeeded Dionysius the Great in that See a short time before.

[12] Euseb. vii. 30.

[13] The term was not accepted by the Council, because in the skilful hands of a man like Paul it could easily be made to bear a *Sabellian* interpretation. When it was afterwards adopted in the Council of Nice, it was wi understanding that the Sabellian gloss was not to be admitted

*Sect of Paul.*

After the sentence of the Council the party of Paul still held together, under the protection of Zenobia, and Domnus was unable to get possession of the episcopal abode. But when Zenobia had been conquered by Aurelian, the question was referred, as we have seen, to the Italian Bishops, who adjudged the Church property to the orthodox side. A sect of Paulites, however, or Samosatenians, continued in existence during the rest of the century.

*School of Antioch.*

*Dorotheus.*

*Eusebius.*

*Anatolius.*

The struggle with this heresy had an influence, perhaps good in the main, though not unmixed with evil, upon the theological development of the Antiochean Church. A good effect was the increased interest awakened in the study of the Scriptures. Dorotheus, a Presbyter learned in Greek and Hebrew, who flourished till the times of Julian the Apostate, was a leader in this direction. So also Eusebius of Alexandria, who had been sent by Dionysius to take part in the controversy against Paul, and Anatolius, an Aristotelian and eminent mathematician. There were, in short, many learned men,[14] with much study, much discussion, much effort to reconcile religion with what was then considered science, —much earnest and thoughtful, and in some cases, it would seem, skeptical investigation.

*Bias towards Error.*

The Aristotelian method, which is better fitted for the detection of bad reasoning than for the discovery of truth, was much in vogue there. There was also a vicious habit of making sacred themes the subjects of school exercises in declamation or debate. In addition to all this, there was

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however, the weakness of the best-considered words in defining the Faith, that notwithstanding this precaution, there was a tendency among some of the most earnest advocates of the Nicene Creed to fall back into the error of Sabellius or into that of Paul. Marcellus of Ancyra was an eminent example of this.

[14] Euseb. vii. 32.

a subtle influence of the Judaizing spirit; the existence of which was indicated by the fact that Quartodecimanism began to revive in Antioch towards the close of the century,[15] though in other quarters it had sensibly declined.

*Lucian and his Disciples.*

*Father of Arianism.*

Among the teachers who gave celebrity at this period to the School of Antioch, Lucian, surnamed the Martyr, labored with great zeal in the text of holy Scripture, but, falling into errors akin to those of Paul, seems to have merited the bad name of father of the Arian heresy.[16] His fault was atoned, in the eyes of contemporaries, by a glorious martyrdom. It was revived, however, in the memory of posterity, by the marked pravity of his disciples, Arius, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Maris of Chalcedon, Theognis of Nicæa, Leontius of Antioch, Asterius, and other distinguished men and women afterwards notorious in the Arian strife. At a later period, Chrysostom somewhat redeemed the character of this School; but what it gained in him, it lost in the person of the heretic Nestorius.

*Martyrdom of Lucian.*

The Christians of Antioch seem to have suffered less from persecution than their brethren in other places, and to have enjoyed on the whole a larger freedom. From the fury of Diocletian, however, or rather of Maximin, they did not escape so easily. Among others that suffered, Lucian was carried a prisoner to Nicomedia, where by his fervid exhortations he restored some who had fallen from the Faith, and prepared them for a martyr's crown. He was starved to death in prison. His fellow-prisoners, it is said,[17] being at a loss for an altar on which to celebrate the Lord's Supper, he laid himself out on his back and said to them, This breast shall be your Table, and you standing round shall be my holy Temple. In this posture he continued for fourteen days, till at last with the simple confession, I am a Christian, he departed in the peace of God.

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[15] Tillemont, *Mem.* vol. iii. makes the cessation of Quartodecimanism in Asia more absolute than is warranted by his authorities. See Letter of Constantine to the Churches, Socrat. *Hist.* i. 9; and on the subject of this paragraph generally, see Newman's *Arians*, i. 1.

[16] Arius claimed him—Theodoret. *Eccl. Hist.* i. 5; and the Catholics more or less admitted the claim—Theod. i. 4.

[17] Apud *Surium*, Jan. 7.

*A Living Altar.*

But, as usual in times of trial, there were many weak souls unable to endure the torments or put up with the disgraces to which the tyrants resorted.[18] Besides those who lapsed, some were driven to the alternative of self-destruction. Two virgins of Antioch, well known in the city for their rank and beauty, drowned themselves to escape the hands of the soldiers. Similar acts of desperation occurred everywhere, and are impartially recorded by the early Church. The history of martyrdom is not a record of heroism only, or of unsullied faith; it abounds with most instructive lessons of all possible shades of human frailty and imperfection.

*Desperate shifts.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE EGYPTIAN CHURCH.

WHATEVER there was of good in the labors of Origen, remained and stamped itself upon the Church mind of his age. His numerous disciples were able, orthodox, and highly influential teachers. That they inherited so much of the solid merit and so little of the extravagance of their master, may be fairly attributed to the firm stand taken against the latter by Demetrius and the Alexandrine Church.[1]

*Origen's Disciples.*

Dionysius, surnamed the Great, a convert from heathenism and a man of large learning, elected to the Episcopate of Alexandria the second in order after Demetrius, was one of the most eminent of these disciples. Like his master,

*Dionysius, A.D. 247.*

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[18] Euseb. viii. 12, 13.

[1] On this chapter, see Neale's *Holy Eastern Church*; Eusebius. *Eccl. Hist.* vi. 26, 30, 35, and parts of Book VII.

he had been for some time at the head of the Catechetical School. The habit of examining and proving all things had been the means, under God, of bringing him to the Truth. He persisted in the habit; and that he might be "a wise money-changer,"[2] quick in the detection of spiritual counterfeits, he gave much of his time to the perusal of heretical and philosophic books:—what scruples he had on the subject being specially removed by a vision. He thus qualified himself to take an intelligent part in the questions of the day.

*His Noble Conduct.*

His noble conduct in the Decian and Valerian persecutions, and in the great plague that followed, has already been alluded to in the third chapter of this Book. It shows his thorough good sense, that, in the latter calamity, he caused those who did their duty, and perished in ministering to the sick, to be enrolled in the rank of Martyrs.

*He opposes Novatian.*

Like Cyprian, his great contemporary, he kept up the friendliest relations with the Roman Church. In the schism that broke out there, having made himself acquainted with the merits of the case, he took the side of Cornelius; and when Novatian wrote to him, by way of apology, that he had been forced against his will to take the Bishopric, he exposed the hollowness of the pretence by quietly advising him to resign.[3] On the vexed question of the day, the treatment, namely, of those who had fallen from the Faith, the Alexandrine rule was milder than that which commonly prevailed. In the West it was considered a great stretch of charity that those who had given evidence of repentance *before* being taken with a mortal illness, should be allowed the communion at their death. In Alexandria, the indulgence was granted without reference to the time at which penitence began. Novatian severity, therefore, won little favor there. So widely, however, had the seeds of that error been scattered through the world, and so strong was the leaning towards austere views, that Dionysius

*Lenity to the Lapsed.*

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[2] "Be ye wise money-changers,"—a saying attributed to our Lord, or to some one of His Apostles.

[3] Euseb. vi. 45.

found it necessary to warn his people on the subject, both orally and in writing. He wrote, also, against Novatian to the Churches of Armenia and Asia Minor; looked with much concern upon the effort made by Fabius in Antioch to have the heresy endorsed by a Council of that Church; and it was through his influence mainly that the Council, when convened, decided against the wishes of their recently departed Bishop. A little while later he had the satisfaction of announcing to the Roman prelate[4] that all the Churches of the East, previously divided on the subject, were restored to peace, and that all the chief pastors were in a state of delightful concord.

*The Bishops united.*

The cultivated tone of the Alexandrine Church rendered it comparatively free from the sensuous or enthusiastic heresies. In Arsinoë, however, and the surrounding district, the Millenarians effected a lodgment for awhile; their literal interpretation of the Apocalypse having gained an eloquent expositor in the person of one Nepos,[5] a Bishop of good character, who by hymns and discourses and pungent confutation of the Allegorists, as the opposite party were called, stimulated the popular expectation of a temporal kingdom of the Messiah. After his death, his followers began to withdraw from communion. Being simple-minded men, they had a vague feeling, perhaps, that the Church was becoming too scholarly and too intellectual.[6] Dionysius made a visit to the disaffected region; invited the Clergy and people to a public conference; conciliated them by warm expressions of

*Chiliasm.*

*Nepos.*

*Charity Victorious.*

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[4] Baronius contends that the letter refers to the question of *Rebaptizing;* in proof of which he urges that Antioch was *the only part* of the East disturbed by Novatianism. There is no ground for this assertion. On the contrary, the fact is patent that Dionysius wrote on the subject of Novatianism to many Churches. In addition to which it is to be noticed that, in the letter to Dionysius of Rome, *Demetrianus*, the immediate successor of *Fabius*, is particularly mentioned among the harmonized Bishops. See Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* vii. 25.

[5] Euseb. vii. 24.

[6] Observe the slightly patronizing but kindly and charitable way in which Dionysius praises "the village presbyters and teachers" who met him in conference. Euseb. vii. 24.

esteem for their departed Bishop; made many judicious concessions; and finally, after three days of charitable discussion, convinced them of the sin and folly of their course. In the agitation of this subject, the *letter* of the Apocalypse gave him so much trouble that he was disposed to question the authority of the Book. But, with his usual moderation, he refrained from rejecting "what so many of the brethren highly esteemed." Suspecting "a sense in it that lay deeper than words," he was content "to admire it the more" in proportion as his "reason failed to sound the depths of its meaning." He argued, however, that it was written by some other than S. John the Apostle.[7]

*Baptismal Question.*

In the Baptismal controversy, Dionysius was more anxious for peace than for victory to either side. His own mind, it would seem, was not quite made up on the subject.[8] He had before him the case of those, who, having left the Church, had afterwards returned; or who, having been initiated in some sect, had received from them a baptism profane and even blasphemous in form; or of those whose doubtful or defective baptism had been covered, as it were, by long communion in the Church. Whether he contemplated distinctly the question of a baptism unobjectionable in form, but defective in respect of an authorized minister, the extracts from his writings given by Eusebius are insufficient to determine. However this may be, he had no sympathy with the arbitrary course of the Roman Bishop. "The custom" (of rebaptizing), he urged, "is not now introduced for the first time, nor in the African Church only. It was known long ere this, under Bishops before us, and in populous provinces; approving itself to the Synods holden at Iconium and Synnada, and to many of the brethren.

*Pacific Views.*

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[7] His doubts were based chiefly on differences of style, which he points out with much acuteness in the manner of modern criticism, but in a more reverential spirit. See Euseb. vii. 25.

[8] Neale's positive declaration, that he was opposed to the rebaptizers, is not warranted at all by the passages cited in its favor: *Holy East. Church*, i. 7. See Euseb. vii. 5, 9.

I cannot bear that they should be embroiled by a reversal of their decisions. For it is written, Thou shalt not remove the landmarks of thy neighbors, which thy fathers have set."

This temperate course did much towards allaying the heat of the controversy; the renewal of persecution, under the Emperor Valerian, probably did more. During the prevalence of this storm, the forty-two months of which naturally suggested visions of Antichrist, Dionysius being banished from his See to Cephron in Libya, labored for the spread of the Gospel in the parts thereabout, and wrote two of the epistles called Paschal Letters. The custom of thus announcing to the Church the beginning of Lent and Easter Day, with religious exhortations suitable to the season, became a prerogative of the See of Alexandria, and was confirmed to it by canon in the great Council of Nicæa.

*Persecution, A.D. 257.*

*Paschal Letters.*

In the Sabellian controversy with some of the Clergy of Pentapolis, already referred to in the fourth chapter of this Book, and in the painful proceedings connected with Paul of Samosata, an important step was made towards that distinctness of conception with regard to the great verities of the Creed, which was becoming more and more necessary to the continuance of peace. The former case showed how easily the most orthodox might fall into seeming heresy,[9] for want of guardedness and precision in the use of terms. But Dionysius had the grace to explain his meaning. His contemporaries had the still rarer grace to accept his explanation. Had it proved otherwise, Arianism might have risen upon the Church a half century sooner than it did, and Alexandria, like Antioch, might have

*Sabellian Controversy.*

*Charity and Wisdom.*

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[9] Intent upon vindicating the personality of the Son, and having in view His human nature only, he said: "The Son of God was made and produced. He is not proper in his nature, but differing in essence from the Father, as the vine from the vine-dresser and the ship from the shipwright; for seeing that He was made, He was not before He was produced." His *meaning* is defended in S. Athanas. *De Sentent. S. Dionys.;* in Bull, *Defens. F. N.;* in Neale's *Holy East. Church;* in Burton's *Testimonies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers.*

numbered an arch-heretic among its Bishops. In later times, when controversy became more bitter and charity more rare, there was less willingness to admit the soundness of Dionysius.[10] But his defence with posterity is his undoubted humility and moderation. With a certain independence of mind and freedom of expression, characteristic of the Alexandrine School, he was aware of the imperfections of human thought and human language. For this reason he was wary of the use of the term *consubstantial.*[11] Its meaning was not yet settled in the Church, and a word of unsettled meaning is always liable to abuse. For the same reason he was ready to examine and reëxamine, to discuss, to explain, to retract if necessary, to understand those who were opposed to him in opinion, and, if possible, to put himself in a position to be understood by them.[12] In this respect, the disciples of Origen and the Alexandrine School seem to have been in advance of most of their contemporaries.

*The term "Of one Substance."*

Dionysius was succeeded by Maximus, and Maximus by Theonas; from whose patriarchate, that is, from the first year of the reign of the Emperor Diocletian, began the so-called era of the Martyrs: the Alexandrine Church having adopted that epoch, instead of the Incarnation, as the beginning of its years. During all this time, the Catechetical School continued in a flourishing condition under Clement II.; under Pierius, who by his many able writings won the title of the second Origen; and under Theognostus, Serapion, and Peter. On the death of Theonas, Peter, the last of these, surnamed the Martyr, succeeded to his

*Era of the Martyrs,* A.D. 284.

*Peter the Martyr.*

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[10] S. Basil, *e. g.*, regarded him as *Fons Arii.*

[11] Which he seems to have used, however, for Athanasius says to the Arians (in a passage quoted by Burton in his *Testimonies*, etc.), "If the patrons of this heresy think that Dionysius agreed with them, let them also acknowledge the term *consubstantial* which he used in his Defence, and that the Son is of the substance of the Father, and also His eternity."

[12] In the way of good sense, good temper, and real Christian charity and moderation, I doubt whether the early Church affords a better lesson than the conduct of Dionysius as described in Euseb. vii. 24.

place. He had the honor of being the first Bishop of Alexandria who sealed his testimony with his blood.

*Troubles.*

The internal troubles common to all the Churches at this period, and which the Egyptian Church under a succession of able and saintly Bishops had rather pruned and kept down than really eradicated, began now to show themselves in the utmost rankness and profusion.

*Meletian Schism,* A.D. 301.

*Its rapid Spread.*

The See of Lycopolis, for some reason now unknown, had an influence in Egypt second only to that of Alexandria. Meletius, its incumbent at the end of the third century, was accused of apostasy, and in a Council holden at Alexandria was convicted and deposed. He refused to submit to the sentence. Availing himself, as was common with schismatics, of the strong and general sympathy for austere views, he broke off into a sect; adopted a narrow platform akin to Novatianism; and proceeded to consecrate new Bishops for all the principal Sees. The schism made itself acceptable by some peculiar rites; by religious dances; by promises of a Heaven suited to gross and fanciful conceptions. Among its favorers, for awhile, was that restless and subtle spirit, the celebrated Arius. Its rapid spread may be accounted for in part by the persuasive talents of its leaders. It would seem to indicate, however, that in Egypt as in North Africa, and indeed in all parts of the world, the great mass of believers were but partially instructed;[13] and that the seeds of heresy—crude notions, half-knowledge, one-sided views, and vague and restless emotionalism—must in the nature of things have been widely disseminated.

*Monachism, Therapeutæ, Anchorets, etc.*

All this might have led to more extensive revolts, if a vent for the errant enthusiasm so common in those times had not been providentialy afforded, in the spontaneous rise and growth of monastic or anchorite establishments in the deserts of the Thebais. In reference to this movement, considering that it arose among the Laity altogether, the course of the Church was eminently tolerant. The Therapeutæ[14] of the first century, "citizens of Heaven upon earth," were probably a communistic Christian sect. Frontonius and seventy companions led the life of recluses, in the middle of the second century. But when the calamitous times of Decius and his successors made common life a burden almost too great for human strength; when the feeling that things were coming rapidly to an end,[15] was wellnigh universal; men fled from society in all directions, so that the deserts of Egypt and Mount Sinai became populous with Anchorets. It was a free and spontaneous movement, the more remarkable that it sprang up at a period when the Church, by her frequent services, by her exact discipline, and by her continuous struggle with ascetic extravagances, seemed committed against all forms of eccentricity, or even, it may be said, of private judgment in religion.

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[13] Alexandria, in fact, with its high-toned, refined, and subtle orthodoxy, and with its essentially Greek spirit, must have been very far in advance of the simple (and perhaps sensuous) faith of the remoter districts.

*Free Movement.*

S. Antony, the father of Christian Monachism, was an eminent example of the spontaneousness of this movement.[16] Brought up in the seclusion of a pious home, and so averse to the society of youths of his own age that his parents though rich never sent him to school, he was left an orphan at twenty, without a friend or companion except his sister, and almost without an acquaintance in the world. One day, in church, not long after the death of his parents, he heard the words of the Lord, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell that thou hast and give to the poor." He obeyed

*S. Antony.*

*His Faith.*

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[14] See Book I. ch. iv. On this subject generally, see Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 11–14.

[15] S. Cyprian's *Epistol. ad Demetrianum* contains an elaborate argument to that effect.

[16] Sozomen, *Eccles. Hist.* i. 13; S. Athanas. *Vita S. Anton.* This work is possibly spurious, or more or less interpolated. It is none the less, however, a most instructive sketch of a peculiar religious experience, well worthy of attention on the part of thoughtful Christian men of every age of the world. For an appreciative though brief account of S. Antony, see Hase *Hist. of the Christian Church*, § 65.

the Divine injunction to the letter.[17] He went home, sold his goods, and distributed the proceeds to his neighbors and to the poor, reserving only a small portion for the necessities of his sister. Shortly after, when again in church, he felt himself particularly addressed by the words, "Take no thought for the morrow." His conscience smote him. He had been taking thought! As soon as he returned home, therefore, he distributed his sister's portion along with the rest of his property; providing for her, however, in a kind of religious house.[18] His subsequent course was in accordance with this beginning. Having heard, that if a man did not work, neither should he eat, he made manual labor a part of his exercises. In the same spirit, he endeavored to comply literally with the precept, "Pray without ceasing." Whatever his mind took up from the letter of Scripture was carried straightway into practice, and so became indelibly stamped upon it. A more complete reaction from the ultra-spiritual and ultra-intellectual tendencies of the doctors of the Alexandrine School cannot easily be imagined.

*Reality of Character.*

It was a life, in fact, almost as much apart from the communion of the Church as from the ordinary ways of the world: a life strictly and entirely between the soul and God. Of the experiences of such a religion no one can be a fit judge, but he who has been in some way a subject of them. It is enough to notice, therefore, without philosophizing upon a state in which outward and inward impressions seem to have been completely blended, that for some fifteen years in his cell, and for twenty years in the closer seclu-

*A Life apart from the World and the Church.*

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[17] One of the latest examples of this intense *individualism* in religion is afforded in that curious and edifying book, "The Lord's Dealings with George Müller:"—a most remarkable man and singularly endowed with the "gift" of faith, if, as there is no good reason to doubt, his account of himself be true.

[18] His sister appears to have been like-minded with himself. When the two met again at a later period, she was at the head of a flourishing sisterhood.

Antony's Battles.

sion of his castle,[19] Antony battled with fleshly, worldly, and demoniacal temptations;[20] tamed his strong passions and strong fancy into obedience to a still stronger will; and acquired a fame which obliged him at last to receive disciples, and to show his face again to his innumerable eager admirers. When he issued from his retreat, it was observed with astonishment that he was as hale and youthful in appearance—neither fat nor lean, but with a light in his eye and a ruddy glow on his cheek—as when he originally entered.

*His power as a Preacher.*

What was more remarkable, he was singularly polished, quiet and self-possessed in his manners. The grace of eloquence was on his lips. To those who gathered around him he spake affectionately in the Egyptian tongue:[21] "Letters, my children, are good for our instruction; but it is an excellent thing to exhort and teach one another. Do you, then, as children, tell your father what things you have learned; and I in turn, as your elder, will give you the fruits of my experience." To his persuasive preaching, miracles, it is said, were sometimes added. "The Lord healed many, in answer to his prayers; and many were delivered from unclean spirits."[22] He consoled the afflicted, he

*His Works.*

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[19] His first place of refuge was among the tombs, his second in a ruined castle, a haunt of serpents and wild beasts.

[20] The tempter brought before him images of the wealth and worldly pleasures he had given up; assumed the shape of a beautiful woman; and when all this failed, filled his cell with demons who assumed beastly forms, and left him almost dead from physical exhaustion. On one occasion, in the desert, the fiend threw a *discus* at him; which when the saint contemplated in surprise to see such a missile in such a place, it slowly melted into air and disappeared. *Vit. Anton.*

[21] There is reason to suppose that in most of the provinces of the Empire ordinary teaching was still confined to the Greek and Latin languages. In North Africa, for example, it was a matter of rejoicing, even as late as the times of S. Augustine, that one Presbyter could be found who could speak in the Punic tongue. On this, see Münter. *Primord. Eccl. Afric.* cap. v. In the East, however, the Liturgies were translated into various tongues.

[22] Whatever may be thought of the miracles of S. Antony, his modesty and humility in connection with them are worthy of admiration. Thus Marcianus,

reconciled enemies, he composed differences, by simply urging upon men that "nothing in this world is to be preferred to the love of Christ."

With such a leader, the cell or the *laura* soon became more congenial to many minds than the social joys of the Church.

*The Laura.*

Among the savage crags and the awful desolation of the mountainous region between the Red Sea and the Nile a refuge was provided for those redundant souls who, with a strong desire to do, but an irresistible propensity to overdo, are apt to be jostled from the walks of common life, and are condemned either to inaction or to eccentric courses of their own. The Christian Church did not originate this movement: it belongs, in fact, to natural religion. She saw in it, however, some elements of good: and when, in the Dioclesian persecution, the strong man of the desert came down to Alexandria to see how it fared with his brethren—"prepared," as he expressed it, "either to combat himself or to behold the combatants;" or when, soberly and prudently, with the gentleness of a woman,[23] he ministered to the wants of the Confessors in prison—the very heathen respecting the sanctity of his character: then she began to glory in her Anchorets almost as much as in her noble army of Martyrs. The system, in fact, was but another form of con-

*Antony in Alexandria.*

*New Form of Confessorship.*

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a military prefect, came to his door, and was very importunate in his request that he would cast out a devil which possessed his daughter. The saint at length showed himself and said: "Why criest thou to me? I also am but a man. If thou believest in CHRIST whom I serve, then pray to God, and it shall be done." Then the man believed, and called upon Christ, and his daughter was healed. *Vit. Anton.*

[23] There was a peculiar amiability about him. In the desert, he not only raised food for himself, but cultivated little patches of ground for the benefit of chance travellers. The wild beasts at first gave him trouble, by trampling on his corn. But one day he laid his hand gently on one of them, and said to the rest: "Why trouble a man who does you no harm? Depart, in the name of the Lord." Afterwards they gave him no further trouble. I cannot but think that it was this sweetness of temper, united to a dauntless courage and immovable self-possession, that secured him immunity in Alexandria when less eminent believers were in constant peril.

fessorship. As one field closed by the cessation of persecution, a new field opened to that spirit of earnest emulation and eccentric heroism,[24] which might be employed for good or might be perverted to evil; but which, for good or evil, was one of the strong elements of the practical religion of the times.

*The great Persecution.*

The Dioclesian persecution raged terribly in Alexandria, and in all parts of Egypt. The martyrs were more numerous and more eminent than at any period before. It rests on the testimony of eye-witnesses, that the sufferers were not only scourged and put to death; but, in cases without number, were stretched on the rack, suspended by the hands, torn with pincers, seared with molten lead, roasted over a slow fire, suffocated with smoke, deprived of their eyes or other members, and, in short, treated with every inhumanity that the most fiendish cruelty could suggest.[25] Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, was among the last that suffered. When he was thrown into prison, his people collected in such numbers about his place of confinement that the soldiers who had been sent to put him to death were unable to enter by the door: but taking advantage of a dark and stormy night, they made a hole through one of the walls of his cell. The martyr understood their intention and aided them in it. Making the sign of the cross and saying, "Better that we should die than expose the people to danger," he stretched forth his head to the executioner, and it was stricken off. He is named by the Greeks "the Seal and end of the Martyrs."

*Martyrdom of Peter, A.D. 311.*

It is said that before his death, in consequence of a vision he had seen, he solemnly warned the Church against Arius, who

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[24] The spirit of emulation—the desire to do something that no one had done before—breathes through the annals of the Eremites. Thus the *Vita S. Antonii* begins: "A glorious contest have ye undertaken, in endeavoring to equal or even to surpass the life of the Egyptian monks." In the same way, S. Antony learned, late in life, that there was one man on earth his superior in asceticism: namely, Paul, who had lived ninety years out of sight or hearing of man, with only a palm-tree for shelter and meat and clothing. S. Antony visited him in time to be a witness of his death.

[25] Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* viii.

*Arius and Alexander, A.D. 312.*

*A new Storm gathering.*

lay at that time under sentence of excommunication. His successor Achillas, however, paid no attention to the warning. Arius was not only absolved and admitted to the Priesthood, but, being set over the Church of Baucalis—one of the oldest and wealthiest in the city—he became, on the death of Achillas, a prominent candidate for the vacant episcopal chair. But in this he failed. Alexander was elected by unanimous consent. This disappointment, it was believed, cast a decided gloom upon the soul of Arius; and is regarded as the beginning of that great cloud, fraught with ages of mischief and dissension, which, at the close of this period of history and at the opening of the next, we find overshadowing the most flourishing portions of the Church.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE CHURCHES IN GENERAL.

*The great Epic.*

In that wonderful Epic which was for so many ages the Bible of the old classic world, and which next to the true Bible has entered most into the mind of the European nations since, the Hero of the poem appears only at the beginning of the Action and at its close: his absence the meanwhile giving occasion for the development of the "excellence" first of one warrior,[1] then of another, and so on through all the changeful issues of the fight, till the "gift," not of each leader only,[2] but of each nation, tribe, or other division of the host has been duly exercised and brought out to view.

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[1] The ἀριστεία of Diomede, of Agamemnon, etc. *Iliados*, v. xi., etc.

[2] The fact that "every good gift" cometh down from above is recognized by Homer in the persons of the most frivolous of his heroes and of the wisest and most earnest. Paris reminds Hector of it (*Il.* iii. 66); Ulysses commends it to the rude minds of the Phæacian youths (*Odyss.* viii. 167); it

This is a summary of what may be called the Divine plan of History in general; more especially of the History of the Church of God. The Word is the Alpha and Omega of it, the author and finisher, the beginning and the end. It is only, therefore, at the opening and the close that this Divine Word is made fully apparent. In the long interval between, man is the visible, and to the mere eye of flesh the principal, worker; the all-sustaining Arm being manifested occasionally, however, and to a greater or less degree, at those eventful *epochs*,[3] properly so called, which bring certain periods to a close, and so typify or prefigure the full appearing of God's Kingdom at the end of time.

*A Type of Church History.*

The story of the First Three Centuries is but a minute portion of that wondrous plan; the mere infancy of a manhood, the real growth of which even yet (it may be) has hardly more than begun. But being beyond doubt a living portion, and in some respects singularly complete in itself, it exhibits more clearly than any other period the essential features of the whole, and may be rightly taken, therefore, as the best representative of it. Its first age, accordingly, is eminently that of the Divine Arm laid bare to view. In His incarnate Presence, or in mighty demonstrations of spiritual power, the Hero of the *epos* Himself appears. Then follows a long and weary season of seeming absence. The great Sower has sown the seed, and gone His way to His rest;[4] the seed being left, as it were, to the natural fertility of the soil. Men, therefore, become the prominent actors. First singly, then in groups or schools, then in local, provincial, or national Churches, they appear

*Lesson of the first three Centuries.*

*The Pentecostal Age.*

*The Age of Schools.*

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flows more sweetly and religiously from that most faultless of the creatures of human genius, the daughter of Alcinous (*Odyss.* vi. 189). Herodotus also is a faithful witness to this truth.

[3] Epoch,—a holding up, a pause, a stop. It is remarkable, that in the great field of physical history which has been opened by modern science, *epochs* are as manifest as in the lives of races or of nations. See Hugh Miller's *Testimony of the Rocks.*

[4] S. Mark, iv. 27.

*The Age of Churches.*

successively before us; and in defeat[5] rather than in victory, each does his utmost to sustain the cause. Finally, when patience has had her perfect work; when the *aristeia* of each lower agent has been displayed; when the weakness and incompetency of the arm of flesh has been made sufficiently apparent: then, a marked Providential deliverance closes the first act of the drama; the Roman world submits to the standard of the Cross; and the first earnest is afforded of that crowning victory, the day and hour of which neither man nor angel can determine.

*The Roman World.*

But the Roman world, which was the first battle-field and the scene of the first great victory of the Gospel, was merely a narrow belt of highly civilized and intellectual nations around the shores of the Mediterranean; and in the account already given of Carthage, Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch, with incidental mention of other Churches, the story of the first three centuries is wellnigh told. So far as the working out of any great principle is concerned—whether of doctrine, discipline, or worship—little remains to be added. A brief notice of the other Churches, however, following the order in which they present themselves on the map of the world, may help the reader to form a more distinct conception of the state of Christianity at this critical period of its history, and to appreciate more fully the nature and extent of the progress that had been so far made.

*The Belt of the Mediterranean.*

In the provinces of North Africa already spoken of in this Book, extending from the Atlantic Ocean on the west to Cyrene on the east, and bounded on the south by Mount Atlas and the Libyan desert, there were by the end of the third century at least one hundred episcopal sees, and possibly a much larger number.[6] The Southern bor-

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[5] 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

[6] In the beginning of the fourth century the Donatists could bring together a Council of 270 Bishops. In S. Augustine's time there were 466 Bishoprics. The multiplication of dioceses was greater in Africa than elsewhere, the Donatists having started it, and the Catholics following their example in

*North Africa.*

*Egypt.*

*Nubia, Abyssinia.*

*Arabia.*

*India.*

*Palestine.*

ders of this narrow strip were exposed to the inroads of barbarous tribes, among which the Gospel had made little or no progress. It may be doubted, indeed, whether in the provinces themselves it had extended much further than it could be carried through the medium of the Latin tongue. Next in order towards the East, along the same belt, come Libya, Pentapolis, and Egypt, covering an area about three times as large as England, dependent more or less on the See of Alexandria, and governed by about one hundred Bishops. In Nubia and Abyssinia there were probably some imprisoned rays of Pentecostal light, but of the state of Christianity in those countries we have no certain knowledge. Arabia, exclusive of Arabia Petræa, numbered twenty-one dioceses, composed for the most part of clusters of village Churches, of which the chief See was Bostra, sometimes known under the name of Philadelphia. The missionary journey that Pantænus is said to have made to India, in which he discovered some traces of the labors of S. Bartholomew and S. Thomas, is supposed by many to have been merely to some part of Arabia. On this point, however, there is room for little more than a baseless conjecture. Passing towards the North, along the Asiatic section of the same belt of the Mediterranean, we come next to Palestine, including Arabia Petræa, in which we find some forty-eight dioceses, dependent more or less on Jerusalem or Cæsarea.

*Jerusalem.*

*Chair of S. James.*

The former of these Churches, which we left under the new name of Ælia at the beginning of its Gentile succession in Hadrian's time, continued to cherish with some pride the name, and it is said the chair, of S. James; and was regarded with no little reverence as the oldest of the Mother Churches. In the history of her Bishops there

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self-defence. In the rest of this chapter, my object is merely to give a general view; and, the *data* being imperfect, I have to rely for the most part on conjecture. See Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book IX.; and Maurice's *Vindication of the Primitive Church*, etc. London, 1682.

seems to be more of the conventional type of saintliness, and perhaps somewhat more of the marvellous, than appears elsewhere. Narcissus, the thirtieth in order from S. James, had not a few miracles attributed to him. On one occasion, at a vigil just before the Easter Feast, the lights were going out in the Church, but were restored—miraculously, it was thought—by the Bishop's ordering water to be brought and poured into the lamps. This holy man was a rigid enforcer of discipline. Offended at his strictness, three wretches were found to trump up an accusation against him, which they even went so far as to confirm by an oath. One of them prayed that he might perish by fire, another that his body might be eaten by a plague, a third that he might lose his sight, if their witness against the Bishop should be found untrue. Narcissus shrank from the blight of a calumny thus fearfully attested, and secretly retired to a hermit life. But the innocence of his character was fully vindicated. The accusers perished according to the tenor of their oaths; and at length, after three successors in the episcopate had in the meantime done their work and departed to their rest, Narcissus appeared again as one risen from the dead, and at the request of the holy brethren resumed the chair he had abandoned. Alexander, a disciple of Origen, and Bishop at that time of a Church in Cappadocia, happening to come to Jerusalem in fulfilment of a vow, was seized upon by the faithful of the Holy City and installed as coadjutor to their aged chief; the irregularity being covered, it was thought, by a Divine communication through a dream or vision.[7]

*Narcissus,* A.D. 195.

*His Accusers.*

*Alexander,* A.D. 212.

This latter prelate proved to be a patron of learning and of learned men; and added a handsome Library to the attractions of the Church in Ælia. It was he who, in conjunction with Theoctistus of Cæsarea, upheld the cause of Origen against his Bishop Demetrius, and gave currency to the learning and perhaps to some of the vagaries of that gifted teacher. He died a martyr, as we have seen, in the Decian

*A Patron of Learning.*

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[7] Euseb. vi. 9–11.

persecution. Hymenæus, the second after him in order of succession, took an active part in the proceedings against Paul of Samosata, and lived long enough to be personally known to Eusebius, the Church historian.

*Hymenæus.*

The Churches in Palestine were distinguished by many noble "wrestlers" in the tenth persecution, whose merits have been more particularly recorded than is common with the martyrs of the early Church.[8] It is a hideous story of imprisonments, tortures, and monstrous inhumanities, relieved only by the vivid faith and indomitable spirit of the sufferers. Wonderful was the steadfastness of those whose privilege it was to die for the Faith: more wonderful still the patient and meek endurance of the much larger number, who were condemned to the mines, or to a crippled life, dependent on the charity of others in little better plight than themselves. But the greatest marvel of all was the buoyancy of hope that sustained the large and timid crowd who were too insignificant, or perhaps too cautious, to share in the sufferings and the glory of the brave Confessors. The Churches were closed. Public services were suspended. The cemeteries and all other kinds of Church property had been confiscated. The Clergy were in prison, or in the mines, or in obscure hiding-places. Heathen worship was revived with the utmost splendor; and wherever one might look, the Church, as an organized body, seemed to be almost extinct. Yet when a lull of a few days occurred in the times of Maximin, and a deceitful peace tempted the Christians once more to show themselves, the effect, we are told, was like a flash of lightning.[9] All places of worship were suddenly crowded; the cemeteries were thronged; hymns and songs of joy and mutual congratulations everywhere resounded. It was like a tree breaking out into blossom in the midst of a winter's frost. So striking was the spectacle of single-hearted gladness thus suddenly exhibited, that many of the heathen beholding it, were led by a sympathetic feeling to attach themselves to the Church.

*Martyrs of Palestine.*

*Lively Faith of the Mass of Believers.*

*Its Effect upon the Heathen.*

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[8] Euseb. *Martyrs of Palestine.*

[9] Euseb. ix. 1.

Cæsarea, not inferior to Jerusalem in influence or actual power, is known at this period chiefly for the countenance given to Origen by its Bishop Theoctistus, and for the part taken by Theotecnus in the case of the heretic Paul. It was also the scene of some of the most fearful of the atrocities of the great persecution. Further on towards the north comes Tyre, memorable for a noble church edifice, destroyed and splendidly restored during the same trying times. There Origen laid down his weary life; there also, under the leading of Methodius, began an endless series of assaults upon the memory of the Alexandrine teacher.

*Cæsarea.*

*Tyre.*

The Syrian Church, which has repeatedly been before us in connection with Antioch, extended from the Isle of Cyprus on the west to Mesopotamia on the east; and in its different provinces eighty Bishops, more or less, might have been counted at this period.

*Syria.*

In the vast Eastern world that lay beyond the borders of the Roman Empire, the signs of an early knowledge of the Gospel are but few and faint. Edessa had been from Apostolic times a centre of light to Mesopotamia. Armenia was converted at the end of the third century by Gregory, the Illuminator. Persia likewise received some rays of the Truth. There, however, the progress of the Gospel was not only stayed for awhile, but was violently rolled back in the organized system and proselyting zeal of the great heresy of the Manichæans.

*The further East.*

Next to Palestine, Asia Minor had been the elect field of the early growth of Religion, most of the writings of the New Testament being addressed to believers in that region; and it was in one of its provinces, Asia Proconsularis or Asia Proper, that Catholic Christianity first assumed its type form in the mystical seven Churches of the Revelation of S. John. It was also the cradle of the most formidable heresies of the early Church.[10] Among the fanatical population

*Asia Minor.*

*Asia Proper.*

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[10] Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century.*

of Phrygia, Montanus was born, and after him Novatianus, the great Schismatic. In other parts, Judaic and Gnostic elements had been blended into their most seductive and most pernicious forms; and the contest with these various errors had been further complicated by the unhappy strife about the Pascha, and by the rationalistic views of such men as Praxeas and Noëtus. From these fiery trials the Churches of Asia Minor came out safe in the main, but not without suffering loss in more ways than one. In fact, while the Churches in this region continued to be among the most populous and flourishing in Christendom, yet their long and weary struggle seems in some measure to have benumbed their strength; so that, after the first glorious era of S. John and his immediate disciples, their history is comparatively obscure and uninteresting.

*Phrygia.*

*Saved so as by Fire.*

The whole extent of country was about six hundred miles in length by three hundred in breadth, embracing, according to the earliest notices, some three hundred and eighty-eight dioceses, the greater part of which, probably, were established during the first three centuries. Of its various provinces the majority are alluded to in the New Testament, and profited by the labors of the chief Apostles. Bithynia seems to merit particular notice as being the scene of the persecution mentioned in Pliny's famous letter to Trajan, and as being the starting-point of the last great war against Christianity: Nicomedia, its chief city, a place on the Propontis about fifty miles east of the present site of Constantinople, having been chosen by Diocletian as the imperial abode.

*Extent of the Country.*

*Bithynia.*

*Nicomedia.*

During the Decian times, Pontus and other parts of Asia Minor were thrown into a state of confusion hardly short of anarchy, by the terrible inroads of the Goths. Among the Christians, many were forced by these barbarians to deny the Faith. On the other hand, the Gospel asserted its power; and the beginnings were seen of that wonderful ordering of Providence, by which nations to whom the light had not been carried were brought by a secret guidance within the sphere

*Gothic Invasion.*

of the light,[11] and the way was opened for a civilization which (perhaps) the *effete* Roman world was no longer capable of receiving.

*Macedonia, Achaia.*

Passing from Asia Minor into the European provinces, there is little of any special interest in the annals of the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia; and still less in what was becoming slowly a part of Christendom, the region that extends from Constantinople to Sardica, and from the Ægean Sea to the Danube. Corinth, which kept its place at the head of the Churches of Achaia, was adorned in the second century by the pastoral labors of Dionysius, one of the wisest of Church teachers, whose writings are admirably but too briefly summed up in the History of Eusebius.[12] He opposed the early inroads of the encratite spirit. Writing to Pinytus, the Bishop of the Church of the Gnossians, he exhorted him *not to impose upon the brethren a burden in regard to purity too great for their strength*, but to have consideration for human infirmity. To which Pinytus answered, with the usual self-complacency of his austere school, that men should be fed with strong meat, milk being fit only for babes. The substitution of cant for sober and good sense is an expedient not peculiar to modern times. It has been in all ages the bane of true religion. Another evil is alluded to by Dionysius in the curious fact that even before his death his own writings had become interpolated and corrupted. Those who had a craving for "strong meat" mixed the "milk" of older and wiser teachers with stimulating elements of their own, to render it more palatable. Several other matters of interest were discussed by the same Dionysius.

*Dionysius of Corinth, A.D. 176.*

*He opposes the Encratite School.*

*Dioceses.*

In the regions of Macedonia and Achaia, with Crete and some other islands, there may have been as many as fifty dioceses at the end of the third century.

We pass on to Italy, containing "anciently some of the smallest and some of the largest dioceses in the world, and yet

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[11] Sozomen, ii. 6.

[12] Euseb. iv. 23. See also Routh, *Reliqu. Sacr.* vol. i.

*Italy.*

the same species of episcopacy preserved in them all; the Bishop of Eugubium, as S. Jerome words it, being *ejusdem meriti* and *ejusdem sacerdotii,—of the same merit and priesthood* with the Bishop of Rome."[13] In one of the earliest Roman Synods on the Paschal controversy, there were but fourteen Bishops present,—few of the Councils at that period being able to muster more. Within a century after, Italy could number more than one hundred Sees. Dioceses were numerous also in Sicily and other islands of the Western Mediterranean.

*Spain.*

The Church of Spain gloried in S. James the Greater, as its Apostolic founder:[14] a story full of difficulties, which the testimony of zealous but modern Spanish writers cannot remove. However this may be, we find it a flourishing part of Christendom in the times of S. Cyprian. At the end of the third century it stands out, in its austere Council of Elvira, as infected more or less with the taint of Novatianism.

*Gaul.*

The Greco-Gallic foundation in Lyons and Vienne suffered terribly in the fifth and sixth persecutions. The Church survived these storms, however; and about the middle of the third century its growth received a new impulse from the mission of seven Bishops (according to Gregory of Tours),[15] who established themselves respectively in Paris, Arles,

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[13] Bingham, ix. v. 16. The Bishops of Italy and the isles adjacent are all enumerated in *Italia Sacra*, etc., *auct.* D. Ferdinand. Ughello Florentin. Venetiis, 1717.

[14] Ferreras argues stoutly for it: "The preaching of that blessed Apostle in Spain was confirmed by the decision of the Roman Church . . . but though it was even mentioned in the Breviary by the order of the blessed Pope Pius V., Cardinal Baronius denied it in the 10th vol. of his Annals. His captious reasoning caused Clement VIII. to have it taken out of the Breviary. Nevertheless, when a great number of writers has demonstrated the fallacy of Baronius, and when the Spanish nation and its Catholic kings had made a solemn protest against that reform, the matter was reopened; and after the mature and searching examination usually given in such cases by the Holy See, the judgment was reversed, and by order of Urban VIII. the preaching of the holy Apostle in Spain was reinserted among the lessons of the Breviary." *Hist. Gen. d'Espagne:* Ferreras—D'Hermilly.

[15] See Gieseler, § 57, n. 2, *Gallia Christian.* Pariss. 1716.

Toulouse, and other central places. One of the seven, Dionysius of Paris, was confounded by subsequent tradition with Dionysius the Areopagite, converted by S. Paul. The great Council held in Arles, at the close of this period, is a satisfactory proof of the thriving condition of the Gallican Church. About the same time we find proof of the existence of Bishops on the Rhine and in Vindelicia.[16]

*The Rhine.*

The Gospel preached in Britain during the Apostolic times, and probably by S. Paul or some of his companions,[17] must have lingered in the island; for in the days of Eleutherus the Roman Bishop, Lucius, a petty prince, sent an embassage to Rome in quest of Christian preachers.[18] In the spread of truth, the supply always in a measure precedes the demand. It is probable, therefore, that there was within the island of Britain knowledge enough of Christianity to produce among the wiser princes a wish for more. Eleutherus granted the request; and at the end of this era the blood of several martyrs in the Tenth Persecution, and the presence of three Bishops at the Council of Arles, witnessed the success of their evangelic labors.

*Britain.*

*Prince Lucius.*

Thus a belt around the Mediterranean Sea, averaging some two hundred miles in breadth, and occupied by the most vigorous and enlightened nations of the old Roman world, was the field of the first struggle and the first victory of the Gospel. But in reference to this region and this period it may be said most truly that the Kingdom of God came not with observation. It was for the most part a silent and unrecorded growth. So uncertain are the materials for forming a correct judgment of its extent in reference to the entire population, and so contradictory in some respects are the *data* usually appealed to, that from one point of view the lowest estimates may appear too

*Summary.*

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[16] Gieseler, § 57, nn. 3, 5.

[17] Stillingfleet, *Orig. Britan.*

[18] Bede, *Eccl. Hist.* ch. iv. Stillingfleet combats this tradition (as it seems to me) on very narrow grounds. In Britain, as in Gaul, there may easily have been several successive foundations.

high,[19] while from another the most liberal calculation seems hardly to give room for all the requirements of the problem. In such a case the middle ground assumed by most modern writers has little more to commend it than either of the two extremes.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHURCH GROWTH AND LIFE.

*Gallienus, A.D. 260.*

*Aurelian, A.D. 270.*

*Diocletian, A.D. 284.*

On the death of Valerian, the Church had rest from persecution for a period of forty years. Gallienus acknowledged it as a *religio licita*,—a sect entitled to legal toleration. That this, however, was not an absolute security against heathen violence, was shown in the case of one Marinus in Palestine, who being a prominent candidate for the office of centurion in the army, was accused for his Christian faith by the opposite party, and was on that account cast into prison and beheaded. The reign of Claudius and the first four years of Aurelian were still more favorable to the Christian cause: and though an edict of persecution put forth by the latter in the fifth year of his reign created a momentary panic, yet its execution being arrested by the sudden death of the Emperor, the rest of the century, including the greater part of the reign of Diocletian, was a season of unwonted peace.

*Progress of the Gospel.*

But with every lull in the storm of persecution, the quiet but broad and steady progress of Christianity became more apparent. The time had gone by when its influence could be confined to the bosoms of the devoted few. Its doctrine, more diffusive than its discipline, had penetrated the palace, the senate, the camp, every place in fact but the theatres and temples; had gone beyond the borders of the Roman Empire; and was becoming so entwined with men's interests and affections, that society could no longer strike it without inflicting wounds more or less serious upon itself.

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[19] In this question, much depends on the force we allow to rhetorical expressions of some of the Fathers. Where statistics are concerned, rhetoric, as a general rule, is extremely unreliable.

*Among all Classes.*

Had this growth of the Church been tenfold more rapid than it was, it would have been vastly more easy to account for on philosophic principles; history supplying instances enough of sects overrunning large portions of the earth, and gaining a dominant power, in the space of one or two generations. Thus Mohammedanism, for example—a great martial impulse among a people intensely martial—swept on to a victorious position upon the swell of a single tide. But the Gospel could boast of no such sudden, uninterrupted and overwhelming triumphs. To win the first and lowest stage of the promised victory; to rise from a position of social degradation to one of ordinary security for life and limb; required ten generations of obscure and persevering struggle. Only here and there, during all this period, did the Church ever appear in other than the servant form. The world the meanwhile was continually agitated: nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; dynasties passing away, philospohies and religions changing, the Empire becoming more and more a sort of chronic revolution. Yet amid all the opportunities thus recurring, Christians alone never struck a blow. During a period in which millions of lives were lost in religious insurrections, the Church alone never for a moment raised the standard of revolt or change. The great Conspiracy alone—for as such the heathen regarded it—never conspired, never rebelled; never threw the weight of a feather into the scale by which political destiny was decided.

*Growth of the Church Slow.*

*Her Servant Form.*

*Her Patient Waiting.*

Now a faith which could survive so long a period of depression is without parallel in the history of successful religious movements: it makes the problem of the Church's triumph so unprecedented, that to attempt to explain it on ordinary principles is simply to ignore what the nature of the problem is.

*The Problem without Precedent.*

Accordingly, of the five chief causes assigned by a celebrated historian,[1] not one is in any way peculiar to the Church. They are equally applicable to one or other of the heresies with which she had to contend. In zealous abhorrence of idolatry; in confident expectation of a Judgment and Millennium; in the profession of miraculous endowments; in ascetic and enthusiastic virtues; and finally, in a polity popular, flexible, and stable in its character, the system of Montanus had a perceptible advantage: besides all which, being later on the ground, and starting free from the encumbrance of Judaic antecedents, it was in a position to avail itself of the experience and to profit by the errors of its hated rival. If such causes, therefore, are to be deemed sufficient, Montanism ought to have become the dominant religion.

*Gibbon's Five Causes.*

Another glaring fallacy of the same historian is, that, while he takes delight in exposing the folly, inconsistency, and extravagance of the primitive believers, and proves incidentally that all these things were scandals to the heathen, he yet manages to divert them from their true bearing upon the question of the Church's growth. Now victories, of course, may sometimes be achieved in despite of weakness. It is obvious, however, that in proportion to the amount of weakness proved against a conquering system, the difficulty increases of accounting philosophically for the prosperity of that system; and the necessity of discovering an extraordinary cause becomes more apparent. A heavy drag upon a ship is a sufficient reason to assign for *the slowness* of her progress; but to speak of such a thing as if it helped in any way to account for her progress, is as contrary to philosophy as to common-sense.

*Another Fallacy.*

But in this respect, the unfriendly hand which has done so much towards exposing the failings and infirmities of the first ages of believers, has rendered a real service to the cause of Truth. No one has done more than the philosophic historian of the *Decline and Fall of the*

*Strength made perfect in Weakness.*

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[1] *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, Esq., *with notes* by the Rev. H. H. Milman, etc., chap. xvi.

*Roman Empire*, to show that Christianity had not an easy triumph. Its progress was slow: which gave abundant opportunity for zeal to flag, and for opposition to rally. The contest was not in a corner, or among half civilized races of inferior type: it was in the centre of æsthetic, scientific, and philosophic culture. The prejudices to be overcome were not those of superstition merely: they were domestic, political, national, religious; interwoven into every thread of that great social web which human wisdom in its perfection had been for so many centuries engaged in weaving. The resistance, consequently, was not a mere fitful gust: it was the stubborn opposition of an intelligent, deep-rooted, and uncompromising hatred. All this appears, unintentionally perhaps, but in colors as true as they are vivid, in the remarkable picture drawn by the skeptical historian. A believer is under no necessity to impugn the substantial accuracy of the portrait. God manifest in flesh—a strength divine made perfect in human weakness—is as prominent in the history as in the doctrine of the Church. The infidel delights in the exposure of that weakness; the believer prefers to contemplate that strength: to appreciate fully the great problem of Church history, it is needful to look at both, and, whatever facts may be found to illustrate either, to admit them in a candid though reverential spirit.

*Victory not easy.*

*Strength in Weakness.*

Considered in its first and simplest aspect, the conflict of early Christianity was an intellectual battle betwixt Truth and Error. It was the sublime theology of the Gospel opposed to a system of superstitions which had lost what hold they ever had upon reason and conscience, and were cherished only as they ministered to pride and lust, or at best to conventional, social, or patriotic feelings.

I.
TRUTH AND ERROR.

Of this essential weakness of the opposing side the Apologist was not slow to avail himself. Heathen superstitions, in all their littleness and vileness, were held up to scorn as well as to merited reprobation. But weapons of ridicule were available on either side. The doctrine

*The Apologist and Sophist.*

of the Cross was literally a folly to the Greeks; while to the supercilious and worldly-minded Roman it appeared as a baleful and extravagant superstition. When a Celsus,[2] therefore, armed with the light weapons of an Epicurean indifference, gave loose rein to the spirit of mockery and profanity, ridiculing the Birth, the Death, the Resurrection, or the Miracles recorded in the Gospels, he found no lack of hearers and admirers. Moreover, what could not be proven against the Truth was easily asserted. The follies and enormities of certain Gnostic sects afforded a handle against the body whose name they assumed; and the heathen mind, from long familiarity with religion as a cloak for vice, could not only impute crimes seemingly incredible, but could give ready faith to the monstrous imputation.

*Weapons of Ridicule.*

And even in the nobler phases of that long-continued struggle, when Christianity appeared on the positive side and presented herself in her sublime theology or pure morality, she was plausibly confronted by appeals to the older system of the Hebrews, or to a philosophy which chameleon-like could assume the very color of the faith it labored to destroy. Such was the policy of the Neo-Platonic and other syncretistic schools.[3] A Plotinus or a Porphyry could adorn Platonism before the mirror of the Gospel, and then accuse the Gospel of borrowing from Platonism. Christianity, in fact, had much in common with all systems of philosophy and religion. She availed herself readily of whatsoever things were true, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report in the learning of the times. When

*Wisdom against Wisdom.*

*The Syncretistic Schools.*

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[2] Origen against Celsus preserves several specimens of his style. In Minucius Felix the Roman spirit is better represented. For an account of the writers against Christianity, see Fabricii, *Salutaris Lux Evangelii*, etc., cap. v. iii.

[3] The Dialogue of Minucius Felix, though it gives the victory to the right side, of course, does not make the victory too easy by putting only feeble arguments in the mouth of the adversary. It does full justice to the heathen side A like remark applies to Justin's dialogue with Trypho, and to Origen's quotations from Celsus.

the votaries of human wisdom, therefore, pointed to what was "good and fair" in the lore of the ancient world, and said to the Church, as Israel said to Judah in their strife for the person of David, "We have ten parts in the king and more right than you," it was not easy to convince them that the one part of Judah, being the head and life, was of infinitely more importance than the other parts together. The victory, in short, seemed to hang long in even balance. For it was not a simple contest between Truth and a sheer Lie. The Lie came to the battle armed in the attributes of Truth. The rods of the magicians could assume the shape and semblance of the Lawgiver's rod. If the latter at length proved superior, it was owing in the main to its greater vitality and endurance. The rod of Moses conquered by swallowing the other rods.

*Vitality of Truth.*

Where the Apologist was deficient, the Martyr by his simple witness unto death was somewhat more successful. Yet even here the cause of Truth had a heavy drag upon it. To a sober and philosophic Pliny, or to the acrid genius of the great historian of the first Cæsars, martyrdom seemed little else than a headstrong and penible absurdity.[4] The witty Lucian could discern nothing in it but food for laughter.[5] And the confessors themselves, as we have seen often enough in the course of early Church history, were not always an ornament to their glorious vocation. It was, therefore, only by little and little that the seed sown in blood took root and grew: only by oft-repeated mowings that the thin grass thickened into solid sward. It was not by martyrdoms, in short, for Error has its martyrs as well as Truth: but by ten generations of continuous martyrdom—the witness unto death being but the pledge of a life-long universal witness under social and political annoyances of every possible description—that the Church was enabled to prove herself in earnest; to purge society of that fearful frivolity wherein, after

II.
WITNESS UNTO BLOOD.

*Martyrs.*

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[4] "Inflexibilis obstinatio."

[5] *De morte Peregrini.*

all, the strength of heathenism lay; and to outlive, if not to overcome, the power of misrepresentation.

*Follies and Scandals.*

The Church's pride in her martyrs proved also a source of weakness, by opening the way to a sort of hero-worship; these worthies being regarded as immediately exalted to a share of the reign and judgment-seat of Christ.[6] Hence a fondness for relics. Hence a dangerous predilection for cemeteries as places of worship. Follies of this sort were more or less rebuked, and were not so bad as in later times. They were patent enough, however, to provoke the ridicule of the heathen, and to turn the edge of the Christian argument against polytheism and idolatry. What troubles were occasioned by the popular reverence for confessors, has been sufficiently noticed in previous chapters of this Book.

III.
SIGNS AND WONDERS.

The spread of the Gospel continued to be accompanied more or less with faith in the assistance of supernatural powers. Of miracles, indeed, in the strict sense of the word,[7] there are few instances recorded, and those not attested by eye-witnesses of the facts. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Apologists, is chary in his appeals to evidences of that kind; and though supernatural gifts are mentioned both by him and by Irenæus and Tertullian as still subsisting in the Church, yet the instances alleged—*the healing of*

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[6] The popular belief that Martyrs went at once to Heaven tended to something like worship of them as intercessors with God. S. Cyprian endeavors at least *to put off* this deification of them: "We believe indeed that the merits of the martyrs and the good works of the righteous avail much with the Judge; but *when the day of Judgment comes*, when after the end of this world the people of Christ shall stand before His tribunal." In the same way, he insists upon the *condition*, on which the intercessions of the martyrs should be found available: "For the penitent, for the diligent, for the prayerful, He can graciously make acceptable what the martyrs have asked and what the priests have done." *De Lapsis*, 17, 36. See Tertull. *De Pudicit.* 22; and Dionysius of Alexandria *apud* Euseb. VI. 42.

[7] Miracles, that is, which, the *facts* being admitted, *must* be ascribed immediately to the Power of God. See, on this subject, Douglas's *Criterion*, Farmer on *Miracles*, Kaye's *Tertullian* and *Justin Martyr*, and Middleton's *Free Enquiry*.

*the sick,*[8] *the cure of the bite of serpents,* and *the exorcising of demons*—belong to a class of wonders which, without a minute knowledge of all the circumstances, or without the corroborating evidence of signs less equivocal, no one feels constrained to receive as Divine acts. The charisms ceased gradually as the need of them ceased.[9] They pertained to the first planting rather than to the growth of the Church. So far as the like of them occurred in later times, they seem to belong to that lower class of wonders, in which faith operates through[10] and not over or against the mysterious energies of nature.

*Charisms temporary.*

But for this latter class of wonders there may have been a real need in the age now under review. Each era of the world has its own spiritual and intellectual wants; and a faith which aims to be useful, instinctively addresses itself to those wants, as commonly understood at the time. Now the world in which the early Christians moved, was one that believed in the reality of demoniacal possessions. Hence a universal faith in magic and divination. Christians were on a level with their age in point of scientific knowledge. As to the agency of demons, they knew as much, or as little, as the world around them knew. But they were superior to their age in believing that the powers at which heathenism trembled had been brought into subjection by the virtue of the Cross, and in

*The Magician and the Exorcist.*

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[8] The raising of the dead mentioned by Irenæus, is expressly distinguished by him from the miracles of our Lord. Euseb. v. 10.

[9] "Not even in the earliest ages of the Scripture history are miracles wrought at random . . . nor are they strown confusedly over the face of the history, being with few exceptions reducible to three eras: the formation of the Hebrew Church and polity, the reformation in the times of the idolatrous kings of Israel, and the promulgation of the Gospel. Let it be observed, moreover, that the power of working them, instead of being assumed by any classes of men indiscriminately, is described as a prerogative of the occasional *prophets,* to the exclusion of the kings and priests." Newman's *Apollonius of Tyana.*

[10] See explanation of the cures wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, and other like cases, in Douglas's *Criterion.*

the holy Name of Jesus might be effectually vanquished. Hence the direction that faith instinctively assumed. The Exorcist kept his place in the Church,[11] when prophecy, miracles, and tongues had ceased. Without pretending to be wiser than the science of the day with regard to the mysterious border-land[12] of the natural and supernatural, Religion felt itself to be more powerful than science. Heathenism was confronted in its strongholds of magical pretensions. The demons that philosophers invoked, and before which philosophers trembled,[13] believers set at naught and put under a ban. And the result was on the whole favorable to their cause. Whether the wonders wrought by the Christian *thaumaturge* were many or few; whether strictly superhuman, or merely the effect of an enthusiastic faith working through certain latent energies of nature: they were at all events wrought in good conscience; they were confidently appealed to;[14] they had the effect of making Christians superior to *the fear* of the

*Faith superior to Science.*

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[11] But when the Council of Laodicea decreed (Can. 26) that no one should *exorcise*, either in public or in private, *unless ordained by a Bishop*, the belief in exorcism as "a gift" was manifestly on the wane. This Council is variously dated from 314 to 372.

[12] Middleton, in his *Free Enquiry*, seems to leave no place for this middle ground—this *terra incognita* of dreams, visions, presentiments, and the like—but attributes all wonders of every kind to mere jugglery: a very lame philosophy to any one who believes that there is such a thing as a soul. See Dodw. *Diss. Cypr.* iv.

[13] Gibbon, with his usual art, represents the philosophers as resorting to magic, by way of rivalry to Christian exorcism. The reverse is certain. Simon Magus, Elymas, and Apollonius are types of a class that flourished long before and long after the Gospel was preached.

[14] Tertullian's challenge (*Apolog.* 23) can leave no doubt of his belief in the reality both of demoniacal possession, and of the power of exorcism: "Let some one be brought forward here at the foot of your judgment-seat, who, it is agreed, is possessed of a demon. When commanded by any Christian to speak, that spirit shall as truly declare itself a demon as elsewhere falsely a god." For references to similar statements of Irenæus, Justin M., Tatian, Origen, Minut. Felix, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, and Eusebius, see *note* to Oxf. translat. of Tertullian, vol. i. p. 57.

black arts resorted to by magicians; and it was felt among the heathen that against a peculiar and mysterious class of evils, to which the whole world was held in hopeless subjection, the Name of Christ was more powerful than any other name.

*Enemies made Friends.*

There was a deeper and broader effect from wonders of a more spiritual and less exceptionable kind. The conversion of men "from enemies into friends" was the glory of the Gospel. These conversions, sometimes instantaneous, especially at scenes of martyrdom, but more frequently the result of gradual conviction, were numerous enough to keep up a steady increase of the Church, even in times of disaster and persecution. On the other hand, while many fell away from timidity or weakness, few of these relapsed into heathenism. They merely bent before a storm they were not able to resist. As soon as the storm passed, these men of little faith returned; and there was no ignominy they would not submit to, no hardship they would not endure, to win their way back to a place among the *standing* brethren.

*Weak Members.*

IV. DISCIPLINE.

It was probably the large proportion of timid disciples of this sort that gave so rigid a form to the discipline of the early Church.[15] Before the third century there was already a *catechumenal* probation of three years preparatory to baptism: a custom for which we look in vain for any Apostolic precedent. For those who lapsed or fell into open sin, there was an exclusion from communion of three or four years; during which term the person doing penance was not allowed to enter the body of the Church. In all this there was a tendency towards legalism, or towards an over-sharp distinction between the "perfect" and the imperfect.[16] It may have been, also, that the probation before baptism fostered a disposition to defer as long as possible the open and full confession of the Name of Christ. A strict discipline, however, seemed necessary for the times. And as the Bishops retained in their own hands a power of indulgence or mitigation, the evils resulting from it were probably less for awhile than the power it gave the Church over a loose crowd of well-meaning, though feeble and timid members. Whatever its merits may have been, it continued in its strictness hardly more than a century.

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[15] Tertullian (*De Præscript.* 41, 42) makes discipline a note of the true Church. To let heathen come into their assemblies was *to give that which is holy to the dogs*, to *cast pearls before swine.* Heretics he represents as perfecting (baptizing) catechumens before they were taught; as allowing women to teach, and even to baptize; as admitting *novices* (persons recently converted) to the Ministry, and allowing them to continue in secular pursuits, etc. It is easy to see, however just his censures may be in the main, that in some points they would condemn the practice of Apostolic times. 1 Cor. xiv. 23–25; Acts. xvi. 27–33.

*A temporary System.*

V. STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.

The numerical strength of the early Church has been so exaggerated by hatred on the one side, and by a too sanguine faith on the other, that it seems impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. The ancient mind was not arithmetical; and when it passed beyond thousands into the region of myriads, it was more apt to fly on the wings of fancy than to keep to the foot-pace of prosaic calculation. From such statistics as remain, it is probable that in the middle of the third century Christians could in few of the large cities have counted more than one twentieth of the population as on their side.[17] But this twentieth part was not a mere crowd, it was a disciplined host. It was to be found, moreover, and with the same characteristics, in all parts of the Roman world. This fact considered, there is enough to account for the *ingens multitudo* of Tacitus, for the *partem pœne majorem* of Tertullian, and similar vague expressions of other writers, without taking such phrases to the letter, or torturing figures of speech into figures of arithmetic. It is certain that the Christians were far less numerous than the heathen. It may be on the whole, therefore, more true to say that the power of the Church led to an unconscious exaggeration of its numbers, than that its numbers in reality increased its power.

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[16] This distinction the Manichæans carried out in its utmost rigor: the "hearers" and the "perfect" were with them almost different *castes*. On the subject of Discipline, see Kaye's *Tertullian*, ch. iv.; also Bingham's *Antiquities*, Marshall's *Penitential Discipline*, Morinus, *De Disciplina*, etc., Bates's *Coll. Lectures on Chr. Antiquities*, etc. For other writers on this subject, see Fabricii, *Lux Evangel.* ix. 7.

[17] Gibbon (ch. xv.) makes on the whole a fair calculation. For copious reference to passages suggesting a higher estimate, see note to Oxford translation of Tertullian, vol. i. p. 3. From Tertull. *Apolog.* 37, it seems possible that among that select population who had the right of *citizenship*, Christians were *a majority*. If so, the large expressions both of Christian and heathen writers are easily accounted for: the rabble and the slave population counting for naught in their estimate of numbers. See Milman, Book II. ch. ix. note. The large and (one may say) absurd calculations formed from the *supposed* number of bodies in the Catacombs have been noticed in chap. iv. of this Book. The reason of *heathen* exaggeration may be seen in Deut. ii. 25.

VI. CATHOLIC UNITY.

A vastly greater influence is to be ascribed to the Catholicity of the Church, the Unity of the Episcopate, and the way in which, under a popular but stable form of government, general and local interests had become welded into one.

*The Episcopate a College.*

The Apostolic episcopate or oversight of the Churches was in its essence *collegiate:* a fact sufficiently manifest in the joint calling, training, and commissioning of the Twelve, in their joint residence for so long a time in Jerusalem, in their subsequent meetings and conferences, and in the way in which each, after their dispersion, became the nucleus of a new band or college of Apostolic fellow-laborers. But the collegiate principle applied to the general interests of the Church.[18] In matters of local interest each Apostle seems to have acted with the utmost freedom and independence.

*Local Episcopate.*

At a somewhat later period, when the number of chief pastors was greatly multiplied, and the limits of jurisdiction proportionally narrowed, there was (humanly speaking) a danger of an undue development of the principle of *local*, *diocesan*, or *independent* episcopacy. There is something that looks like this in the writings of S. Ignatius.[19] A Bishop in his own city-see, supported by his own crown of Presbyters, regarding himself as speaking and ruling in Christ's stead, and responsible for his conduct to Christ alone, might easily degenerate into a puny lord spiritual, isolated within his own narrow circle, and as absolute in pretensions as weak in real power. But as heresies increased, the oneness of the Bishopric showed itself to be the Divinely appointed safeguard against this peril. A common cause enforced common counsels. Through Synods holden regularly once or twice a year in presence of the whole body of the brethren, and through canons requiring at least two Bishops to concur in consecrations,[20] the episcopate became established in its proper Apostolic form of a *collegium:* a commonwealth, that is, of *colleagues* or *brothers,* all supporting a common burden, and each responsible to all for the portion he upheld.[21]

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[18] This was shown in the question of circumcision. S. Paul might have settled it by his independent inspiration; but it was thought better that a matter of common interest should be settled by common consent. Hence the Council in Acts, xv.

*Synods.*

From this accrued many obvious advantages. Though Ecumenical Councils were as yet impracticable, the Provincial Synods maintained a strict concert with one another;[22] and the Church Catholic was knit together by a living web of intercommunion, pervading the remotest quarters of the great Roman world.

*Intercommunion.*

It was not the least of the advantages of all this, that it nipped in the bud any tendency that might exist towards absolutism, on the part of Presbyters or of Bishops.[23] However a pastor might feel disposed to lord it in the circle of his own labors, there was a vast body of his peers, by whom on complaint from any quarter he could be called to an account. One of the highest positions in all Christendom, conjoined with powerful court credit, could not save Paul of Samosata from trial and deposition; and it was only a timely explanation that saved Dionysius of Alexandria. The whole-

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[19] *Looks like it,* only; for it is obviously unfair to construct an *Ignatian theory* out of a few *obiter dicta* in one or two Epistles. If, however, a theory be thus constructed and opposed to the *Cyprianic theory,* the contrast is decidedly in favor of the latter. The Bishop of S. Ignatius (that is, according to certain critics) has very much the air of a spiritual autocrat. But the Bishop of S. Cyprian is an officer sternly and closely limited from above, from below, and in fact from all around. Dodw. *Dissert.* vii.

[20] Apostol. Canon, i.

[21] Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur. S. Cypr. *De Unit. Eccl.*

[22] In these Synods the *representative* idea was prominently brought out: Concilia ex universis Ecclesiis, per quæ et altiora quæque in commune tractantur et *ipsa representatio totius nominis Christiani* magna veneratione celebratur. Tertull. *De Jejun.* 13.

*Bishops mutually accountable.*

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[23] Thus the attempt of Victor and Stephen in Rome was checked effectually by Irenæus and Cyprian. In summing up his statement of the *primacy* in Rome, Döllinger candidly remarks: "But we must confess that the power of the Roman pontiff, and his relations to the universal Church, *were not yet fully developed*. . . . It was in *the natural order of events* that the *formation of particular Churches should precede*, and that the connection of the Bishop with his Clergy and flock should be firmly established: *then came the time* for the institution of the metropolitan authority," etc. On which I remark: (1) The *supreme* power in any society is always the first to be *developed*. Time merely limits that power by developing lower functions, with a system of checks and balances. Thus Moses and Aaron were more distinctly and absolutely the supreme power in Israel than any of their successors. (2) The "natural order of events" in the early Church was *first* Christ the Head, *then* Apostles representing Christ, *then* great metropolitan foundations (Jerusalem, Cæsarea, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, etc.), *then* Churches everywhere. In other words, it was from the Head down through the members, not up through the members to the Head. The highest powers of the Church were the first manifested. If, then, a papal supremacy was the highest power of all, we ought to find it most clearly exhibited from the first. (3) The arguments for *Episcopacy* and *Papacy* are essentially different from one another. Episcopacy we see clearly in Cyprian, Ignatius, James of Jerusalem, *the Apostles;* and nowhere more clearly than in *these last*. Papacy we see clearly in Gregory VII., less clearly in Gregory I., less clearly still in Silvester, least clearly of all in the first three centuries. As it approaches its supposed fountain-head, it becomes so dwindled down that even Döllinger, in defending it, has to call it a *primacy*—not a supremacy. But a primacy differs from a supremacy, as the power of a constitutional president differs from that of an autocrat or absolute monarch. See Mosheim's *Commentaries*, cent. ii. §§ 20–24 (Murdock's translation). On *Development*, see W. Archer Butler's *Letters;* also Brownson's *Quarterly* (1847–8).

some working of this system is witnessed by the fact that while on all other subjects men differed and formed sects; while the Creed and the Scriptures were exposed to the violence of controversy; yet, in the matter of government there was a wonderful agreement: even the heretics and schismatics, the Montanists, Manichæans, Novatians, Donatists, and Meletians, had all hierarchies similar in form at least to that of the Catholic Church.

*Episcopacy universal.*

While the general government of the Church was thus powerfully controlled and self-limited, local interests were managed in an equally admirable way. That polity, on the whole, has most vital force, which within limits of mutual respect allows the freest exercise to individual gifts, and employs those gifts most largely for the benefit of all. In the early Church, the solid and balanced strength of an Apostolic Episcopate was the support and guaranty of such wholesome liberty. Hence, in Pentecostal times, the liveliness with which the charisms were exercised in the assemblies of the faithful.[24] No ill-compacted system could have endured such a strain upon it, without falling into disorder. So, in later times, the number and activity of the orders of the sub-ministry;[25] the popular influence of the Virgins and Confessors; the frequent meetings of the whole body of the People; the exciting elections of Bishops and Presbyters; the trials of the lapsed or other offenders, in the presence of a deeply interested crowd, half-witnesses, half-judges; the eager interest, in short, that each member of the community took in the administration of the discipline, the charities, and the finances of the

*Local Polity.*

*Exercise of Gifts.*

*Varied Functions.*

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[24] 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

[25] In the Roman Church (A.D. 250) there were *subdeacons*, *acolyths*, *exorcists*, *readers*, *janitors* (Euseb. vi. 43); to which may be added *copiatæ* (who attended to the burial of the dead), *catechists*, and others; though some of these were "functions" (like the charisms of Pentecostal times) rather than "orders" proper. In the Apostolic canons, *subdeacons*, *readers*, and *singers* are put in the same category with *laymen*, so far as discipline is concerned (Canon 43). On this subject, see Bingham's *Antiquities*, Book III.; see also *Constitut. Apostol.* ii. 57; viii. 19–26, 28.

Church: all this would have led to inextricable confusion and to schisms without end, had not a balance-wheel been provided in the constitution of an Episcopate, which, being Catholic as well as local, could concentrate the strength of the whole Body upon any particular point. Thus in the Novatian troubles at Rome, in the sedition of the five Presbyters at Carthage, and in the resistance made by Paul's party at Antioch after the condemnation of that heretic: Cornelius, Cyprian, and Domnus were sustained by the authority of their colleagues all the world over. On the other hand, when the People were the aggrieved party—as in the case of the Churches of Leon and Astorga in Spain—the ready intervention of the Episcopate at large neutralized the aggressions of any particular prelate, even of the energetic Roman Stephen.

*The Balance-wheel.*

*Instances.*

A polity so flexible and so strong, so popular in its action and yet so conservative in its basis, was doubtless an element both of growth and of solid influence to the Church. Another influence, closely akin to this, is the power of Christian life; a subject already anticipated in part, but meriting in some particulars a more exact consideration.

VII. CHRISTIAN LIFE.

In the servant stage of her pilgrimage, in times of persecution, when led as it were into the wilderness and kept apart, the Church had to be in a peculiar sense "the household of faith"; not the complement merely of social and domestic ties, but in a very large measure the practical substitute for them. The first effect of the Gospel was to break up family relations. Husband was set against wife, and wife against husband; and a man's worst enemies often were those of his own house. Tertullian, indeed, paints a glowing picture of that home in which man and wife were one in the same faith; and thereby shows incidentally how much Christianity was doing to elevate and refine the conjugal relation.[26] But the very glow of the picture creates a suspicion that fancy furnished some of the brightest colors. It is remarkable, also, that children have no place in

*Domestic Ties loosened.*

*The Christian ideal of Home not favorable to Marriage while the World remained Heathen.*

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[26] Tertull. *Ad Exor.* lib. ii.

the matrimonial paradise thus depicted. It is still more remarkable that the effect of the picture, on the whole, is to discourage wedlock rather than promote it. The simple truth was, that, living in a world each breath of which was pestilential to all but the strongest natures,[27] a believer shrank from matrimony in proportion as the ideal he had formed of that blessed state was drawn from the pure precepts of the Gospel; or, if marriage from any cause seemed to be unavoidable, he dreaded at all events the responsibility of an increasing family. In a society still heathen, with just light enough to show the foulness of its enormities, children could seldom be regarded as arrows in the strong man's quiver: they were too easily perverted into weapons for his spiritual foe.[28] To be childless, therefore, or, if the burden of offspring were imposed, to see them depart early to a safer and better world, was considered by many a legitimate desire. There are, nevertheless, many blossoms of early piety in the annals of those times. Attention was paid, also, to Christian education.[29] On the whole, however, a genial domestic tone was not conspicuous among the graces of the period. The pruning of the vine had fallen to the "wild boar

*Children not desired.*

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[27] To appreciate that "present distress," which led to an undue development of the *encratite* spirit, one must have a notion of the indescribable turpitude of heathen morals; but to give an idea of this, even under the veil of Latin, would render a book unfit to meet the eye of the ordinary reader. The state of modern heathenism, in this respect, is suggested as plainly as Christian decency permits, in the very trustworthy book of Mr. R. B. Minturn, Jr., *From New York to Delhi.*

[28] "Shall we seek burdens, which even the Gentiles for the most part avoid? . . . . burdens not only troublesome to us, but perilous to faith—" Tertull. *Ad Exor.* i. 5. The frightful amount of pauperism, with exposure of infants, prostitution, and other crimes, led many of the fathers to believe that the world was overstocked. See Chastel's Essay on the *Charity of Primitive Christians;* S. Cypr. *Epistol. ad Demetrianum.*

[29] Infant-baptism was favored by the Church, and even infant-communion. But prudential considerations led many devout persons, such as the mother of S. Augustine, to reserve the blessing for later and safer years. Tertullian was a decided advocate of such delay.

out of the wood," and the more tender shoots of the plant were naturally the first to suffer.

*The Church a Council.*

Under these circumstances, the life of the early Christians —their *polity* as S. Paul appropriately terms it—was public and Churchly to an extent inconceivable in our days. To say that believers were assiduous in communion or common prayer, gives but a faint notion of the real state of things. The *ecclesia* was, to them, not a mere place of worship: it was a synod, a council, an ecclesiastical exchange;[30] in short, an assembling of themselves together for devotional, social, charitable and business purposes.

*Rites and Worship.*

In the morning they met, to the great disgust of the heathen, for the "daily bread"; and as they went forth from these antelucan meetings, they were known to be Christians by the smell upon their breath of the *merum matutinum*.[31] The sacrament was still a communion in the strict sense of the word. In the celebration of it there were but few departures as yet from Apostolic simplicity. Tertullian notices,[32] as customs resting on tradition, that it was received before daybreak, from the hands of the Bishop only, and with great care not to spill the wine or to drop any particle of the bread. Moreover, on one day every year, oblations were made for the dead in commemoration of their *birthday:* that is, of their entrance into everlasting life.[33] The consecrated elements were carried to the sick by deacons. Communicants sometimes took with them a portion of the bread, and tasted it before each meal. The Eucharist was usually celebrated in Church: it was not as yet forbidden, however, to celebrate it in prison, or in other unconsecrated places. It is probable enough, that by the end of the third century it was accompanied with an increase of ceremonial. The sacrament of Baptism had already admitted many additional observances. Previous fasting, exorcism, renunciation, unction, trine immersion, recital of the Creed, use of sponsors, and after the day of Baptism a week's abstinence from daily washing, are among the peculiarities mentioned by early writers. The worship of the Lord's Day was signalized by standing in prayer, fasting and kneeling being prohibited. To this it may be added, that signing with the cross was practised on all occasions.[34]

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[30] Churches, therefore, were sometimes called *Synodi, Concilia, Conciliabula, Conventicula*. Bingham's *Antiquities*, viii. i. 7. For the order observed in Church, see *Apostol. Constitut.* ii. 57.

[31] The daily Eucharist seems to have been the custom of Rome, Carthage, and some other places: see Bingham, xv. ix. 4; also S. Cyprian, *De Cœnâ Dom.* The weekly Eucharist was probably the general rule.

[32] Tertull. *De Coron.* iii.; see notes to the Oxford translation.

[33] The names of the departed were inscribed upon writing-tables called *diptychs*, and after being commemorated, were erased to make room for others. The offerings made by the friends of the departed contributed to support the charities of the Church. The prayers offered *pro dormitione* were founded on the principle announced by S. Cyprian: "Let us always be mindful of one another . . . . and *pray for one another* wherever we may be . . . . and

*Customs.*

At night Christians came together in a more sociable way for the *Agape*, or Love-feast: a sober but cheerful repast, which the rich provided, and which to many of the poorer brethren must have been the principal meal of the day.[35] These feasts already in the third century were becoming more luxurious, and less religious than was consistent with good order, or even with good morals.[36] It would seem, however, that such misuse was only occasional, and was connected with mortuary repasts, rather than with the love-feasts proper. Indeed, many kinds of night meetings were customary among Christians: which gave occasion of scandal to the

*The Agape.*

*Its Abuse.*

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whichever of us shall be permitted to be soonest with the Lord, let his love for all endure, and let him entreat the Lord's mercy without ceasing for his brothers and sisters." *Ep.* lvii. *ad Cornelium.*

[34] Tertull. *De Cor.* iii.

[35] "Our feast showeth its nature in its very name. It is named by the word which in Greek stands for *love*. . . . If we aid every poor man by this refreshment, it is not to enslave their liberty, not to fill their bellies at the expense of their self-respect, but to be like God, taking special thought for men of low degree." Tertull. *Apolog.* 39.

[36] The earliest canonical notice of abuses in the love-feasts seems to have been in the Council of Laodicea: Can. 27, 28.

heathen, and could hardly fail to be attended more or less with disorders and abuses.[37]

*Mutual Sympathy.*

*Hospitality.*

There was enough in the vicissitudes and perils of the times to give a peculiar zest to these frequent meetings. Through that wonderful network of fraternal sympathy, the Communion of Saints, no part of the Body could suffer without all feeling with it.[38] A brother, for example, after a long journey from Antioch or Jerusalem, having saluted all the sister Churches by the way, arrives in Rome, bearing credentials from his Bishop. Perhaps he has with him a handkerchief or a garment, stained with the sacred blood of some recent martyrdom. He is hospitably received. The first brother he meets is glad to entertain him. His feet being washed and his wants attended to by the *sister* and *conserva*, the devout wife of his host, in the evening he is presented at the Agape; and the brethren all salute him with "the kiss of peace." It is needless to go into the particulars of such scenes. To any one who has studied the heart of the old classic world, so childlike and so strong amid its manifold corruptions, it is easy to see that the *non-resistance to evil* inculcated in the Ecclesia, and so miraculously maintained for three hundred years, was no stagnation in the flow of earnest life, but rather the token of a mysterious and divine controlling power.

*Heathen Calumnies.*

But a heathen, to whom not a syllable was breathed of the nature of this *politeia*, except as he could extort a half-confession from a reluctant wife or a stammering slave, and who knew nothing of the controlling influence of the Sermon on the Mount, would naturally regard it all as a sort of permanent *conspiracy*. It was to be expected that such an one should curl his lip with scorn, as he spoke of Christian *love*;[39] that the opprobrious word *stupra* should be associated in his mind with the antelucan Feast; that his abhorrence should find vent in *caricatures*, some of which, in all their fearful blackness of mingled calumny and profanity, are still occasionally exhumed amid the living death of Pompeii;[40] that he should regard the Church, in short, as a slumbering volcano, the outbreak of which might at any moment involve the whole social fabric in ruins.

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[37] Hence, Can. 35 of Elvira: "Women are forbidden to keep vigils in cemeteries, lest under the pretext of devotion crimes be perpetrated." The passion for stimulating services in cemeteries and over the *martyria* seems to have led off believers to the meetings of heretics. Concil. Laodic. Can. 9.

[38] "Communicatio pacis, appellatio fraternitatis, contesseratio hospitalitatis." Tertull. *De Præscript*, 20. Even the scoffing Lucian was struck with this feature of Christianity. "It is incredible to see the ardor with which that people help one another in their wants. They spare nothing. Their first legislator has put into their heads that they are all brethren."

*Daily Life Blameless.*

And this, indeed, was the wonder of early Christian life: a stumbling-stone to many, yet to others a means of irresistible conviction. The life of the Ecclesia, so mysterious, so hated, so suspected, was accompanied in the case of individual believers with a daily walk, quiet, peaceable, and self-restrained, in which calumny itself found it difficult to detect a serious flaw. A heathen husband might, indeed, be vexed at the plain attire of his Christian wife; he might look upon it as an unseasonable display of gravity, when she shuddered at the profanities of his worldly guests, or declined being amused at their unseemly jokes: her rising from his side at night to utter a prayer; her visits, if allowed, to the night meetings for devotion or to the hovels of the poor for charity; her taking of a bit of bread reserved from the matutinal Feast before each meal; her gesture of abhorrence in presence of idol-worship; her frequent use of the sign of the Cross; these and other peculiarities might annoy him not a little, and in some of them his superstitious fears might lead him to suspect a taint of magic:[41] yet, on the whole, when he found that wife to be patient, quiet, helpful—the greatest contrast imaginable to the

*Peculiarities.*

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[39] The famous phrase, "See how these Christians *love* one another," was sometimes not a compliment, but an indecent taunt. See Minut. Fel. *Octavius*.

[40] The *Graffiti*, or wall-scribblings, of Pompeii have shed a light upon some peculiarities of the early Church. See an article in the *Edinburgh Review* (1859).

[41] Tertullian, *Ad Uxor.*—in which every word is a window, revealing the secrets of home-life.

frivolous spouses of his neighbors—there would be a strong inducement to look more closely into the reality of her religion.

*Their Virtues not Popular.*

But, on the other hand, the Apologists had to complain that there were husbands, fathers, and masters, to whom wanton wives, profligate sons, and eye-serving slaves were less offensive, on the whole, than Christian inmates in their houses. From causes already mentioned, the virtues most apparent among believers were those of the extraordinary and heroic type. There was little room for the qualities most prized in heathen society. Patriotism could not flourish under the frost of continual persecution. Public spirit could be hardly more than a name, when to serve the public in any capacity was to be implicated in the sin of idol-worship. Military merit was much hindered from a similar cause, though the army seems to have been regarded with some favor.[42] So with all the amenities of social and friendly conviviality; with the observance of holidays, feasts, amusements, and public or private entertainments. The peculiar charm which classic culture had thrown over all the fashions of the world, was but the graceful covering of a mass of moral putrefaction. Each flower concealed a serpent. Each grace was so entwined with the tendrils of a wanton polytheism that, to escape defilement, Christians were fain to eschew "the king's meat" and to thrive on the "pulse and water" of a bare sufficiency. Hence, even the arts were looked upon with suspicion. The painter or sculptor who became a convert to the Gospel, did so at the sacrifice of his professional livelihood. By degrees, however, there was a relaxation in this respect. The poetry of life, so closely pruned for a season, began to bud forth again; and, amid the touching memorials of the saints who slept, the elements of an elevated, pure, and intensely Christian art, began to settle upon the Church as quietly and spontane-

*Lack of Public Spirit.*

*Aversion to the Arts.*

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[42] Military service was objected to by Tertullian, Origen, and others, but chiefly on account of the danger to faith and pure morals. That Christians were quite numerous in the army there can be no question. Tertull. *Apolog.* 5, 37, 42. See *note* to Oxford trans. of Tertull. p. 184.

*Christian Symbols.*

*Serious Views of Life.*

ously as dew upon the grass. The great-hearted *Fossor*[43] could not leave his labor of love, without inscribing upon it some tender symbol, some edifying parable. The Cross, the Dove, the Lamb, the Good Shepherd, and, most popular of all, the Ichthus[44] or Fish, the Ark, the Gourd of Jonah, the heaven-sailing Ship, the four-headed River of Paradise, the Rock smitten by Moses, or even a few heathen images suggested by the Sibylline Books, such as Orpheus with his lyre charming the beasts, marked the resting-places of those who having fallen asleep in peace awaited the promised dawn of a joyful Ressurrection.[45] But such things were luxuries for the Catacombs. In controversy with the heathen and in the walks of every-day life, Christians were rigidly unæsthetic and utilitarian.[46] Fashionable festivity was to them but a ghastly grin upon the face of death. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that in the eyes of that numerous class, common to all ages, who value present comfort more than honesty and truth, believers were looked upon as a sunless race, *lucifuga natio,* hateful to the *lares* and *penates* of a lively Roman home.

While nothing was further from the mind of the early Christians than communistic notions,[47] yet nothing was more frequently reported of them, whether for censure or for praise, than that "they had all things common." The love-feasts, already mentioned, were associated with a well-known maxim of our Lord,[48] and gave the rich an opportunity to cheer the hard lot of the poor, without injury to the sentiment of honest self-respect. "As the elm supports the vine, and is beautified by it," so the rich were to support the poor in such a way as to cherish in them genial and amiable affections. Other objects of charity were the confessors in prison; the destitute families of the martyrs; the care of widows and orphans, who were placed under the particular charge of the Bishops; the rearing of children exposed by their parents; the rescuing of a few at least from that vast flood of uncared-for souls which set in towards the brothels, the bridewells, the galleys, or the schools of the gladiators. Life among the ancients was held very cheap: souls still cheaper. Cato, a model of domestic virtues, boasted that he kept no worn-out slaves. When the Gospel came, it partly found, and in part created, a more humane feeling[49] Still, the abominable treatment of the *familia* by heathen masters, during this period, may be inferred from the fact that, horrible as were the tortures inflicted upon the Martyrs, they were after all but the ordinary punishments of refractory slaves. The *eculeus* or

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[43] The *fossores* or delvers were characters of no little importance in the Roman Church: see Perret, Aringhi, and others, on *the Catacombs.* On the general subject, see Didron's *Christian Iconography.*

[44] Anagram for ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ ῾ΥΙΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ—Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour.

[45] The Council of Elvira in Spain (A.D. 305) forbade pictures in Churches, "lest the object of worship should be depicted." It is probable from this that pictures (as distinguished from mere symbols) had begun to be used in Churches; though it was a long time before they came into open and undisputed use, even as ornaments. Eusebius speaks of portraits of Christ and the Apostles, but as a matter of *heathen custom* only: *Eccl. H.* vii. 19.

[46] "Flowers were made to smell, not to crown dead bodies with," a Christian is made to say, in the *Octavius.* Tertullian speaks in like manner: *De Coron.* v. Even Clement of Alexandria, who lived in a Church community already wealthy and luxurious, shows no indulgence to the ornaments and superfluities of life: see *Pædagog* passim. In the burial of the dead, however, cost was not spared.

*Charities*

*to the Poor,*

*to Widows, Orphans,*

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[47] See the admirable essay of the Rev. Stephen Chastel on the *Charity of the Primitive Churches:* translated by G. A. Matile; also, C. Schmidt, *Essai Historique sur la Société*, etc., Paris, 1853; F. de Champagny, *La Charité Chrétienne*, etc., Paris, 1854; A. Tollemer, *Œuvres de Miséricorde*, etc., Paris, 1853.

[48] S. Luke, xiv. 12; compare *Constitut. Apostol.* ii. 28.

[49] I do not think it necessary (with Chastel and others) to ascribe the humane sentiments of Seneca, Trajan, Pliny, Antonius Pius, and other amiable heathens, to any supposed knowledge of the Gospel. That old Roman world was human, not diabolic. As such, it had its share of good Samaritans, worthy publicans, and benevolent centurions, a thousandfold more deserving of praise than such whited sepulchres as Cato. If there had been no humane feeling, the humanity of the Gospel would not have been appreciated.

*Slaves.*

*Manumission.*

*Other Channels of Benevolence.*

rack was an almost necessary implement in a heathen home. Now the Church, by inculcating a true religious equality of men in all conditions, and by putting her anathema upon such cruelties, for example, as the selling of slaves to gladiatorial schools, did much towards remedying the worst and most inveterate evils of the system. Indiscriminate manumission she could not encourage: indeed, she was obliged to forbid it, except where there was a reasonable prospect to the freedman of an honest livelihood, or where the manumitter engaged to be his patron or protector.[50] For it was not the least among the cruelties of the times, that masters often freed their servants to escape the burden of their support; thus adding to that rabble of famished wolves by which the great cities were infested. The redemption of captives was another channel of benevolence. So with the struggle against the famines and pestilences by which the ancient world was so frequently desolated. So, again, with the burial of the dead; which being sadly neglected by the heathen, the Church had to bear more than a double burden.

*Sources of Income.*

*Offerings.*

To meet these and similar claims required, on the part of the Church, an almost boundless liberality: more especially as the burden was laid exclusively upon the faithful. But the supply never failed to come. In the language of Clement of Alexandria, Charity was not a cistern, but a well: the more it was drawn from, the clearer, the sweeter, and the more abundant its flow. And that it might flow freely, all factitious supplies were rigorously rejected. To give, was to communicate with the altar: to be at variance with the altar, was to lose the privilege of giving. When Marcion the heretic was excommunicated, his liberal donations, amounting to the sum of two hundred thousand *Sestertii*, were cast out with him.[51] In the same way, the offerings *pro defunctis*, namely, the lavish oblations prompted by affectionate remembrance of those who slept in the Lord, were not accepted, nor was the name of the deceased pronounced in the prayer *pro dormitione*, which formed part of the Eucharistic Service, unless he had departed in the peace of the Church.[52] The acceptance of the gift was involved in the acceptableness of the giver. Hence, not free-will offerings merely, but the free-will offerings of an holy worship, were the ordinary sources of revenue. These, given

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[50] Among the Canons bearing on the subject are Ap. Can. 82, and Gangran. 3. See also *Apostol. Constitutions*, iv. 9. For much interesting matter on this point, see Chastel's *Charity*, etc.

[51] Tertull. *Adv. Marc.* iv. 4.

*Three Objects.*

weekly or monthly, according to the ability of the giver,[53] were divided into three portions,—one for the clergy, one for Church services, one for charities of all other kinds; and were dealt out daily, under the direction of the Bishop and Deacons, to these several objects. It was one grave charge against the Montanist prophets, that they accepted salaries,[54] instead of trusting each day to furnish its own supplies. They preferred cistern-water to that which came fresh from the spring. But among the Catholics, in addition to the amount that flowed in regularly from the sources above mentioned, there were occasional contributions for particular purposes; and not unfrequently it happened that the old Pentecostal ardor broke

*Free Gifts.*

forth anew, and wealthy converts, on entering the Church, or more especially on election into the ministry, put their all into the sacred treasury,[55] and were content thenceforward to live of the altar. Thus there was always enough for all emergencies. The fountain might now and then choke for awhile by the accumulations of worldly prosperity; but when persecution came the obstruction rapidly disappeared, and charity flowed freely and copiously as before.

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[52] S. Cyprian. *Ep.* i.; Tertull. *De Monogam.* 10.

[53] In exhorting to liberality, the Church naturally referred to Pentecostal times, to Jewish tithes, first-fruits, etc., for the measure in which individuals should give. There was no sort of compulsion, however; and the clergy were not allowed to exact pay for any special religious services.

[54] This seems to be the drift of the sharp invectives of Apollonius, Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* v. 18. The followers of Theodotus the Byzantine adopted the same custom. Such a business-like arrangement offended the religious instinct at first, because it looked too much like taking thought for the morrow. Like many other heretical inventions, however, it crept into the Church, and stayed there See Münter, *Primord. Eccles. African.* xxii. 7.

[55] Eusebius speaks of this as common in the first and second age: iii. 37. In after-times, Cyprian and Gregory Thaumaturgus are well-known examples of the same liberality.

*Mark of the early Church.*

It will be seen, therefore, that even in the point of liberality, the Primitive Church had a mark of distinction from other ages. Whatever she accomplished in that way was done simply in faith, and in the Name of Christ. There was little or no help from that vague philanthropy which, like the promised "signs"[56] of the Gospel, may be said to "follow them that believe"; being, in fact, an accompanying power of the Truth, an attendant of Christian civilization in general, rather than a product of personal belief. In the first three centuries there was no Christendom, no Christian world. There was nothing of that moral atmosphere, warmed by the Gospel, if not quickened by it, of which a far-reaching, enlightened, and scientific benevolence—feeding the poor, healing the sick. casting out devils from the social system, and doing many wonderful and noble works—is a characteristic feature. The Church and the world then were in deadly antagonism. Christianity was, in fact, the Church in the wilderness. Everything around was barren and hostile to her; and Charity, to exist, was obliged to be armed at all points in the panoply of a simple, uncompromising Creed.

*Opposition to the World.*

*Militant Spirit.*

On the whole, the power of Christianity was more manifest, during this period, than its softer and milder traits. It was not a time such as that described by the Prophet, when "old men and old women" could "dwell in Jerusalem, every man with his staff in his hand for very age; or when the streets of the city" could be "full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." It was an era of Martyrs, Confessors, Doctors, Virgins, and Anchorets: a camp-life, as it were, having a glory and beauty of its own; a sternly militant age, in which a man would part with his raiment to purchase him a sword, and in which the grace of endurance was preferred to virtues more comfortable and ordinarily more prized. The perfect fruit of the period, its peculiar and supernatural grace, was that of *non-resistance to oppression*. Nor was this virtue a mere softness on the part of Christians,—a mere abstinence from riots, insurrections, plots, and rebellions. It was an armed watch set at the very door of the lips. For three hundred years there was a society pervading the Roman world, consisting of men of every class and condition, and horribly oppressed, which, during all that period, did not even talk or think resistance.[57] However the yoke might gall them, they simply waited in quietness and confidence till the Hand that had put it on them should graciously take it off.

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[56] Mark, xvi. 17, 18. The promise was fulfilled to *the letter* in Pentecostal times; *in the spirit* it is fulfilled in the hospitals, homes, asylums, universities, and other charities of Christian civilization; also, perhaps, in the scientific subjection of the elements of nature: a power by which Christendom is as far in advance of heathendom, as the Apostolic Church with her miracles was in advance of the age in which *peregrinabatur*—she was "a pilgrim."

*Non-resistance.*

And this quiet persistence was undoubtedly the secret of their strength. There were, as we have seen, corruptions among the early Christians, abuses, follies, superstitions. Scandals, perhaps, were almost as numerous in proportion to the number of believers as in any other age.

*Patient Continuance.*

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[57] "How often do ye spend your fury on the Christians . . . in obedience to the laws! How often doth the hostile mob attack us . . . with stones and fire! With the very frenzy of Bacchanals, they spare not the Christians even when dead. . . . And yet what retaliation for injury have ye ever marked in men *so banded together*, *so bold in spirit even unto death?* —though a single night might with a few torches work out an ample vengeance, *if it were lawful with us* that evil should be met by evil. . . . Would strength of numbers and forces be wanting to us? . . . We are a people of yesterday: yet we have filled your cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, *your very camp*, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum! . . . For what war would we not be sufficient and ready . . . who so willingly are put to death? We could fight against you even unarmed and without rebelling . . . by merely separating from you . . . and leaving you to tremble at your own desolation . . . a vacant tenement for unclean spirits." Tertull. *Apolog.* 37. See also Origen. *Contra Cels.* lib. iii.

Yet, on the whole, amid changes going on all around, the Church alone stood firm and unalterable, witnessing to the same Truth, and witnessing in the same way, for three hundred years of almost continuous persecution. During all that period the Preacher preached, the Apologist explained, the Martyr died, the Bishop ruled, the Priest ministered, the Deacon gathered the poor, the Exorcist banned the demons, the Fossor delved in the bowels of the earth: in a word, the Church kept together. But the same power which kept the Church together, kept the Truth together. When the end of the first trial came, and the fourth century opened upon a day sevenfold more laborious than any that had gone before it, it found the mass of the faithful through the world still united in one doctrine, one discipline, one worship, one spirit: a unity the more amazing that it was free and spontaneous, and accompanied with every form of partial inconsistency and weakness. Where one martyr had bled two hundred years before, there were now hundreds prepared to bleed for the same testimony. Now this persistency could proceed only from faith. And faith in such a connection is but another word for life. In a living faith, therefore, not only unparalleled in itself, but exhibited under circumstances without parallel in the history of mankind, we find the secret of the continued existence, growth, and triumph of Christianity through the first and critical era of its manifestation.

*Living Faith.*

## CHAPTER IX.

### TIMES OF DIOCLETIAN.

THE forty years of peace, mentioned in the beginning of the last chapter, contributed not a little to the prosperity of the Church and to its growth in point of numbers. Bishops, no longer persecuted, began to be treated by all classes with a marked respect. Not a few Christians served in the household of Diocletian, countenanced by the faith of Prisca his wife and Valeria his daughter. There was, in fact, no position of trust that was not open to them; the good-will of the princes having gone so far as to relieve them from all necessity of conformity to the State worship. It naturally followed that converts came in by crowds. The old places of worship had to be enlarged. New churches, spacious, magnificent, and solid, were erected in all the chief cities. Sacred vessels of gold and silver, collections of sacred books, and perhaps treasures of other kinds, began to accumulate in sufficient quantity and splendor to be a temptation to the eye of the spoiler, and to add another to the many causes of persecution that still existed, though hidden for the time by a deceitful show of peace.

*Forty years of Peace*

*Prosperity and Wealth.*

The usual attendants of prosperity were not slow to follow. Discipline was relaxed. Worldliness came in as a flood. The Episcopate, reverenced by the faithful and honored by infidels, presented itself as a prize of spiritual ambition.[1] Hence quarrels, intrigues, factions; all the evils, in short, with which the Church was created to contend, and for the war-

*Corruption.*

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[1] Euseb. viii. 1.

fare with which the long ages of martyrdom and of rigorous discipline were a barely sufficient preparation.

*Two Augusti and two Cæsars* A.D. 286, 292.

What cause it was that led to a change of policy on the part of the Emperors, has been somewhat variously stated. It is only known that the able and prudent Diocletian, having divided the burden of government, first with the rude soldier Maximian, whom in reference to his own proud title of *Jovius* he surnamed the *Herculius* of his administration; and afterwards with the two *Cæsars*, Galerius whom he stationed as a bulwark on the banks of the Danube, and Constantius similarly set for the defence of the borders of the Rhine; and having strengthened this quadruple scheme by a skilful interlacing of matrimonial ties: proceeded with singular success to crush the innumerable enemies of the empire; and crowned a long series of victories in Britain, Gaul, Africa, on the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, by the extraordinary glory of a triumph over those inveterate rivals of Rome, the defiant and for a long course of years indomitable Persians. He had thus attained the summit of human glory and success. The repose of mind and body for which he sighed was now fairly within his reach. Under these circumstances, some evil genius—most probably Galerius, who passed a winter with the Emperor in his palace at Nicomedia just after the Persian war[2]—sug-

A.D. 303.

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[2] L. C. F. Lactantii, *De Mortibus Persecutorum.* Lutet. Paris, 1748. The spirited narrative of this writer is sharply criticized by Gibbon and Milman; though neither of them deviate from it in any material point, and where they do, it is with very little reason or show of authority. Lactantius was probably an African by birth, a disciple of Arnobius, and an able rhetorician—"the Christian Cicero." Invited by Diocletian, he removed to Nicomedia some time before the persecution, and remained there probably during the ten years. He was intimate with the Christian and other members of the imperial household. On the whole, he had greater facilities for correct information about the events he describes than commonly fall to the lot of contemporary historians. Gibbon's objections to him, or rather his insinuations, are: (1) that he was an *obscure rhetorician; i. e.*, a man devoted to literary labors,—an objection that would apply to most historians; (2) that *he wrote to flatter the pride of the victorious court*,—to which it is answer enough, that his book is

gested to his mind that one enemy of the empire, more obstinate than the Persians, remained not only unconquered, but threatening if not soon checked to carry the whole world before it. This enemy was the Church. Particular cases could be mentioned of a dangerous fanaticism in this mysterious body. A youth in Africa of the name of Maximilian had pleaded scruples of conscience against serving in the army, and had undergone death rather than consent to serve. Another Christian, Marcellus, a Centurion, had on a public holiday suddenly thrown away the ensigns of his office, abjured carnal weapons, and refused any longer to do the bidding of an idolatrous master. He also suffered death rather than submit. Could such examples be tolerated by a sovereign who had brought all the world to his feet? Could a sect be allowed to flourish and to hold places of high trust in the very Palace, which fostered such ridiculous and rebellious scruples?[3] Galerius, for his part, had already answered the question. He had weeded his own army of the dangerous sect. So also had Herculius, the valiant leader of the West.[4] It only remained for Jovius, the wise and victorious inspirer of their counsels, to complete his great services by a triumph which no one before him had been able to achieve,

*Designs against the Christians.*

*Pretext for it.*

*Christians expelled from the Army.*

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dedicated, not to princes, but to an humble confessor; (3) that he is a *passionate declaimer*,—a remark that applies equally to Tacitus, and to all historians of any feeling who are called to describe the deeds of tyrants. The objections made to the authenticity of this treatise, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, are founded chiefly on a supposed inferiority in point of style to the other works of Lactantius. On the other hand, there are many marks of his style; and the less careful polish may be owing merely to the fact that the author, when he wrote, was more in earnest than in some of his other essays. On this and similar points, see notes to the edition mentioned above, *Le Brun*, *Dufresnoy*, and others.

[3] These instances are taken by Gibbon from the *Acta Sincera*, Ruinart. In both cases the fear of idolatry was probably the cause of the scruple, though a feeling against the lawfulness of war was entertained by some Christians.

[4] Euseb. viii. 4, mentions that many had to sacrifice or leave the army; but only a few here and there were put to death. The story of the Theban legion, which belongs to this period, is not related by any contemporary writer.

and to leave the Empire to his successors a united and homogeneous whole.

*Special Motives.*

To suggestions of this kind many particular influences were added. Hierocles,[5] the philosophic leader of a revived paganism, did what he could for the cause. So, also, the mother of Galerius, a fanatical devotee of idols. Finally, the oracle of Apollo at Miletus being consulted, the extermination of Christianity was declared necessary to appease the long-offended gods of the Empire.[6] Under such incentives, seconded by the innumerable pleas to which the ears of princes are open, Diocletian's hesitancy at length gave way: he decided on a general persecution, and appointed a day for the inauguration of a decisive religious war.

*The War begun.* A.D. 303.

It was the twenty-third of February, the feast of the Roman god Terminus: a day selected, says Lactantius, *ut quasi terminus imponeretur huic Religioni.* A little before the dawn, the Prætorian Prefect with a crowd of army and state officers repaired in a body to the Church of Nicomedia,—a noble edifice which crowned a commanding height in full view of the Palace, and in a densely built quarter of the city. The doors are forced open. There is an eager rush and fruitless search for some visible object of worship. The Holy Scriptures are found and committed to the flames. A general pillaging ensues. Diocletian, who looked on from the Palace, thought it imprudent to gratify Galerius with the spectacle of a conflagration; but the Prætorian guards being sent, with siege instruments of every description, the sacred pile, whose lofty site and solid structure had excited the jealous suspicion of the heathen, was in a few hours levelled with the ground.

The example thus set was an index of the scheme of the more prudent and perhaps more clement Diocletian. To destroy the churches of the Christians, to seize and burn their holy books, to break up their Assemblies, and by the strong hand of power to prevent their ever reuniting, was the plan he seems to have proposed to himself. This example was followed even in those parts of the Empire where from motives of clemency or secret favor, life and liberty were respected.

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[5] He wrote against Christianity, and tried to prove that the works of Apollonius of Tyana were superior to those of Christ. He was answered by Eusebius and others. See Fabric. *Lux Evangel.* cap. viii.

[6] The Oracle replied that it could not speak, "on account of certain righteous men." Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* ii. 50, 51.

*Plan proposed.*

The next day came the expected edict from the Palace.[7] Christians of every grade were declared incapable of any office or public trust; freemen were disfranchised, slaves forbidden to hope for freedom; the courts of law were to be closed against the whole body; and whatever they might suffer, they could sue for no redress. When this edict was put up, a certain Christian, fired with a zeal more natural than evangelical,[8] rushed forward and tore it down. "It is a triumph," he exclaimed, "of the Goths and Sarmatians!" For this he was put to the torture, roasted before a slow fire, and finally thrown into the flames; all which he endured with admirable and heroic patience.

*Edict of Outlawry.*

But severe as this edict was, it fell short of the wishes of the pertinacious Cæsar. He continued to ply Diocletian with arguments and complaints; and it served to give force to his urgency, that twice within the following fortnight the Palace was found to be on fire. The first time, according to the account of Constantine,[9] it was struck by lightning. The

*Palace set on Fire.*

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[7] The various edicts of this persecution are found in Euseb. viii. 2, 3, 6, 8, 10; and *De Martyr. Palest.* 3. Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 13 et ss. See Fabric. *Lux. Evangel.* cap. xii.

[8] Gibbon's sneers at this and a few similar cases of natural though intemperate zeal are sharply rebuked by Guizot, and mildly disapproved by Dean Milman. See notes to Milman's Gibbon, chap. xvi. Lactantius, it is to be observed, praises only the courage of the man who destroyed the edict: his act he expressly condemns. Eusebius, however, seems rather to approve it: viii. 5.

[9] Constantine, in his *Orat.* chap. xxv., mentions the lightning. Lactantius mentions two fires, and attributes them both to Galerius. Milman well observes, that if a Christian fanatic had been the culprit, he would have avowed the deed and gloried in it.

*Cause unknown.*

act, however, was on both occasions generally attributed to an incendiary; though who the guilty party was, no inquiries nor even tortures could discover. It was only known, that everybody was examined except the servants of Galerius. He, however, was clamorously indignant; conducted the investigations himself; laid the whole blame to the Christians; and finally left the Palace in well-feigned alarm. After his departure no further attempt was made.

*Cruelties inflicted.*

Diocletian by such arts was worked into a fury unworthy of the character for prudence he had hitherto maintained. His wife Prisca and his daughter Valeria were forced to sacrifice. The Eunuchs of the Palace, among whom Dorotheus, Gorgonius, and Peter, are particularly mentioned by Eusebius, were tortured over a slow fire and at length put to death. The Christians of Nicomedia experienced a similar treatment. Some were gathered in companies, without regard to age or sex, and consumed within a ring of flames. Others, with heavy stones attached to them, were cast into the sea and drowned. To terrify others, unheard-of tortures were invented.[10]

*Similar Cruelties in other times.*

*No excuse for them.*

There have been periods in history when Christians, separated from their kind by an unnatural asceticism, in an age of barbarous manners, or amid the madness of revolutionary times, have inflicted similar sufferings upon their fellows. In behalf of such it may be pleaded, that they insanely believed themselves to be doing God service. Their cruelty, therefore, may be set down to the hallucinations engendered by a solitary life, or to the frenzy of long-continued civil or domestic warfare. No such excuse can be made for the magistrates of Diocletian's day. They were husbands, fathers, citizens, men of sagacity and experience, living in an age of domestic tranquillity and security, and votaries of a religion which made tolerance its boast. When we see such men, therefore, not only persecuting a peaceable class of their fellow-creatures, but using all the appliances of science to prolong the agony and sport to the utmost limits of endurance, we behold a depth of depravity beyond which, it is to be hoped, none deeper can be imagined. If any can be found, it is in the unfeeling profanity which, in an age still more enlightened and more human, can palliate such doings and coldly take part with the oppressor against the oppressed.

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[10] Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* xv.; Euseb. viii. 6.

*General Account.*

It is beyond the plan of this history to go into the particulars of the long and cruel war which for ten years was carried on against the unresisting Christians.[11] It extended into all the provinces, except the Gauls. There Constantius Chlorus complied with the wishes of the elder Sovereigns so far as to demolish the church buildings: the true temple, says Lactantius, he left unmolested. His underlings, it is probable, were not in all cases equally forbearing. Britain, at this time, received its first baptism in blood: S. Alban, two citizens of Chester, and sundry other persons in other places, having been put to death.[12] In the rest of the provinces believers of either sex were burned, drowned, or slaughtered, not singly but in crowds. The prisons and mines were filled with confessors. Virgins were ravished or driven to the alternative of suicide. The sacred books and vessels were seized and destroyed: those who refused to give them up were put to the torture. Officers were stationed at the temples to force the people to sacrifice; and that no Christian might have a chance of justice, altars were set up in the courts and in front of the tribunals, so that the judges could not be approached without offering to idols.

*S. Alban, in Britain.*

*Course pursued.*

*Number of Martyrs.*

Of the number that suffered it is difficult to obtain a satisfactory account. Basing the calculation upon nine Episcopal Martyrs particularly mentioned by Eusebius, and upon the ninety-two Martyrs of Palestine commemorated by the same writer, Gibbon would reduce the whole number to about two thousand persons. But Eusebius does not profess to give more than a list of those cases which were known to himself or were particularly edifying. Of the hundreds who were barbarously mutilated and condemned to a lingering death in prison or in the mines, he makes only a passing mention.[13] He also avoids particularizing those whose martyrdom was sullied in his opinion by anything unworthy of so honorable a calling. Now it is a well-known fact that follies and infirmities are often accompaniments of heroic self-devotion. The roll of the Palestine Martyrs, therefore, is, on every reasonable supposition, only a select list; and bears probably the same relation to the whole number that suffered, as the names of officers in a gazette to the undistinguished victims of the rank and file. The persecution was undoubtedly a mighty effort to crush Christianity. More than once the tyrants boasted that they had succeeded in the attempt.[14] That in such an endeavor, continued for ten years, they accomplished nothing more than the death of some two thousand persons, is as contrary to reason as to the testimony of all early writers.

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[11] In the 8th book of Eusebius, and in the work of Lactantius, there are details enough: also in Ruinart. *Acta Sincera.*

[12] Bede, *Eccl. H.* cap. vii.

*Select List.*

In the meanwhile Diocletian, having celebrated his Persian triumph in Rome and returned to Nicomedia, came to the rare determination of resigning his authority and retiring into the shades of private life. A tedious illness, with an ever-increasing sense of weariness and disgust, gave force to the philosophic reasons which may have led to this resolve. A greater weight was attributed by some, and

*The Emperors abdicate,* A.D. 305.

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[13] See B. viii. 13; also *Mart. of Pal.* ch. 13. For Eusebius's common way of giving only noted examples, see also viii. 6; iii. 33; v. *preface;* vi. 1, etc. That believers were slaughtered *in crowds* has the testimony of Lactantius, xv., and Euseb. viii. 9, 11, etc. Eusebius's profession (viii. 2 and *Mart. Palest.* 12) to omit *particulars* both of calamities and of follies and dissensions that led to those calamities, is quoted by Gibbon as evidence against his honesty; but, in computing the *number* of Martyrs (a matter upon which it bears materially) the profession is conveniently forgotten.

[14] Trophies were set up at Clunia in Spain and elsewhere: Diocletianus Jovius, Maximianus Herculius, . . . *nomine Christianorum deleto* . . . etc.; or, *superstitione Christi ubique deleta,* cultu Deorum propagato. Baron. *Annal.* an. 304.

with no little probability, to the ambitious urgency of his imperious son-in-law, the Cæsar Galerius. However this may be, abdication is a dangerous experiment to one who has made a free use of absolute power. Diocletian resigned with a show of dignity. But it was with undisguised reluctance that the Western Augustus Maximian, bound by a previous oath to his colleague, and, as Lactantius suggests,[15] influenced by the threats of Galerius, followed the extraordinary example, and retired to a solitude which he eagerly left again as soon as a favorable opportunity presented.

*Policy of Galerius.*

The empire of the world devolved upon Galerius in the East, and Constantius in the West. To reconstruct the quadruple scheme of Diocletian, it would have fallen to each of these two to nominate a Cæsar. Galerius took the whole arrangement into his own hands. By a politic stroke, in which the feelings of the abdicating sovereigns seem to have been as little consulted as those of Constantius, he presented to the army two ignoble creatures of his own, under the title of Cæsars. One of these, Severus, he sent to Italy; where he stayed long enough to make himself odious by a terrible system of exactions, but was soon confronted, overwhelmed, and slain, in the revolt of the usurper Maxentius the son of Maximian: which latter had been easily persuaded to resume the purple. The other, named Daza or as he was afterwards called Maximin, was commissioned to tyrannize over Egypt and Syria. A third prize

*Severus.*

*Maximin.*

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[15] The highly probable account that Lactantius gives of these transactions, is somewhat injured by his throwing it (according to classic precedents) into a *dramatic form*. Milman thinks that the picture drawn by "the coarse and unfriendly pencil of the author of the Treatise" is inconsistent with "the profound subtlety" ascribed to Diocletian's character. But no *profound* subtlety is attributed to him. It is merely the commonplace cunning of laying the blame of his cruel actions upon his counsellors: "qui severitatem suam alienâ invidiâ vellet explere." Eutrop. ix 26. To this kind of character the portrait drawn by Lactantius is perfectly true. Indeed, it is true enough to Diocletian's character, even as softened and excused by the skilful pen of Gibbon.

which Galerius had within easy reach, and which he was reserving for his old friend and comrade Licinius, was snatched from his eager grasp by the superior promptitude of young Constantine, the son of the Western Emperor, Constantius. This young man, born before his father had attained the rank of Cæsar, and deprived of all hopes of the succession by the new matrimonial arrangements which followed that event,[16] had attached himself to the service of Diocletian, and at the time of the abdication was one of the most promising officers of the army. Galerius was aware of his importance, and laid a skilful plan to secure him. But the young soldier was on the alert. Stealing a march on the crafty approaches of the tyrant, he sped from Nicomedia as fast as post-horses could carry him; and arrived at Boulogne just in time to accompany his father on an expedition to North Britain, to receive at York a dying blessing from his lips, and to be forced by the not unwelcome violence of the army into the adoption of the title of Augustus. The announcement of this was sent, with many plausible excuses, to the Eastern Emperor. He received it in grim acquiescence. Conceding to Constantine, however, only the secondary title of Cæsar, he conferred the name of Augustus on his favorite Severus; but, this latter soon going to wreck before the triumphant usurpation of Maxentius, the honor finally devolved upon Licinius for whom he had from the first designed it.

*Escape of Constantine.*

*Constantine elected by the Army.*

*Licinius.*

Thus the Roman world was partitioned among six masters: Galerius, holding a trembling balance between two Augusti, Maximin and Licinius, in the East; and the old warrior Maximian, nominally respected by Constantine and Maxentius, in the West: under all of whom, except Constantine, the edicts of persecution continued to be enforced against the Christians. But the number of oppressors was rapidly reduced by various reverses.

*Six Heads,* A.D. 308.

[16] Constantius divorced Helena the mother of Constantine, and married Theodora the daughter of Maximian. In the same way, Galerius had to marry Valeria, Diocletian's daughter.

In the East, Galerius giving himself up to dissolute living, fell a prey to that horrible and loathsome disease, which is famous for having quelled the pride of two other distinguished persecutors, Herod the Great and Philip II. of Spain. He was almost literally eaten up of worms.[17] A tumor, badly healed, festered into a spreading sore, which became a nest of innumerable vermin and filled the whole Palace at Nicomedia with its pestilential effluvia. In vain Apollo was applied to for relief. Nurses and physicians could approach the sick man only at the peril of their lives. Under the torture of this fearful plague, his body visibly corrupting from day to day, but his mind still struggling with natural feelings of remorse, he at length put forth an edict of toleration, remarkable for its apologetic and almost penitent tone.[18] "It had been his wish," he declared, "that the Christians should be reclaimed from the folly of forming a separate society in the State, and should return to the customs of their fathers. Many had been put in peril of their lives, some had been punished with death. But, inasmuch as the greater part continued obstinate in their delusion, and were falling into a state in which they neither worshipped the gods nor served the Deity of the Christians, therefore it seemed best, in accordance with the uniform mildness and clemency of his reign, to grant them a certain indulgence; that they might hold their assemblies as before, and entreat their God for the safety of the Emperor and the State as well as for their own, that prosperity and security might everywhere abound."

*Fearful end of Galerius,* A.D. 311.

*Edict of Toleration.*

In the contest for empire between Maximin and Licinius which followed the tyrant's death, this tardy indulgence was of little avail to the Christians. Maximin, indeed, seemed for awhile to have relented; and, encouraged by edicts from him similar to that of Galerius, the Christians

*Maximin.*

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[17] Lactantius describes it with a fearful minuteness: *De Mort. Pers.* xxxiii.; also Euseb. viii. 16.

[18] Given at length in Lactantius, xxxiv., and Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* viii. 16.

came forth from their concealment with hymns of joy, and resumed the celebration of their sacred rites. The treacherous calm lasted hardly six months. At a hint from the Emperor petitions came in from the principal cities, that measures of severity might be resumed. Persecution began once more, but in a milder form: persuasion, intimidation, and punishments short of death, being strongly recommended.[19] At the same time an effort was made to give greater dignity to pagan worship. Priests and high-priests, of decent moral character and of high social rank, were appointed. A gorgeous ceremonial was devised. The old gods, revamped, as it were, with new attributes adopted from Christianity, were set up in splendid shrines, and propitiated by feasts and sacrifices and magical incantations.

*A Brief Calm.*

*Reform of Pagan Worship.*

On the other hand, the Gospel was assailed with the weapons of ridicule. Forged acts of Pilate,[20] full of blasphemies against Christ, were widely circulated, and taught to young persons in the schools. The dignity of dying for the Faith was denied to believers. Tortured and mutilated, with their eyes put out, or branded with other marks of shame, they were hidden away in dungeons or banished to the mines. So elated was Maximin with the apparent success of his endeavors—the gods smiling upon him, as he proclaimed, in teeming harvests, genial seasons, and in the unexampled prosperity of his dominions—that he carried the religious war beyond his own borders into the Christian kingdom of Armenia, and succeeded in establishing the persecution there.

*Weapons of Contempt.*

*Conquest of Armenia.*

But his confidence was soon shaken by a terrible series of reverses. First, his insatiable licentiousness inspired universal execrations: the eunuchs, who scoured the provinces for victims to his lusts, making the vile quest more odious by gratuitous insults and indignities. Tax-gatherers followed the eunuchs, and, if possible, were still more hated.

*Terrible Reverses.*

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[19] Many, however, were put to death; and among others Peter the Martyr, Bishop of Alexandria. See Euseb. Book IX.

[20] Euseb. ix. v.

Then came a general drought and an unprecedented famine. The rich were reduced to beggary, beggars were massacred or drowned. An awful pestilence followed close upon the famine. In the midst of these calamities the charity of believers was enabled to shine forth again. Amid despair and desolation they did their duty to the sufferers of every kind. Not content to visit and relieve the sick, they fought with the street dogs for the abandoned bodies of the dying or the dead. At length, Heaven smiled once more upon the despairing provinces. Maximin, defeated by Licinius, first turned his rage against the pagan priesthood who had incited him to civil war; then wandered wildly from place to place, attempting to rally his resources; till at length taking poison, but not in sufficient quantity to destroy life at once, he was slowly eaten up by an internal fire, and so miserably perished.[21] Before his death he issued a new and ample edict of toleration and redress to the Christians; in which he apologized for himself, and laid all the severities of the persecution to the door of the officers and judges.

*Charity of the Christians.*

*End of Maximin, A.D. 313.*

The splendid Church of Tyre, demolished during the persecution, but now rebuilt on its old site with greater magnificence than ever, signalized in one place the restoration of Christian worship. The example was followed in other cities. The death of Maximin was not merely a deliverance of the Church; it was accompanied everywhere with a joyful munificence, an uncalculating zeal in restoring her waste places, and a promptness of restitution on the part of the heathen, that showed her to have gained, even in things temporal, far more than she had lost.

*Church of Tyre.*

In Italy and North Africa, Maxentius, the twin monster of Maximin,[22] a prodigy of superstition, cruelty, rapacity and lust, had in the earlier days of his usurpation pretended to favor the Christians. Having succeeded, however, in gaining the good-will of the army by largesses and flattery, and having by the aid of Maximian his father baffled all the efforts of Severus and Galerius, he gave himself over to the fiend of licentiousness, and became an object of abhorrence to all his subjects alike. Like Maximin he indulged in a wantonness of debauchery, which set all law and all social ties at defiance. The maid or matron that once attracted his eye, had no refuge from dishonor but in self-destruction. Sophronia, a Christian lady, wife of the Prefect of the city, adopted this mode of escape. The tyrant's minions were ready imitators of his foul example. To make his turpitude complete, the vague religious feeling which had inclined him at one time to favor the Church, led him finally into a mire of the most grovelling and insane superstitions. Whether he persecuted directly for religion's sake, is somewhat doubtful. It is more probable that the sufferings of the Christians under his reign, were consequences of the general state of outlawry in which the edict of Diocletian had placed them, rather than of any particular hostility on the part of the western tyrant.

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[21] The horrible description of his end is given with much fulness by Euseb. ix. 10.

[22] Euseb. *De Vita. Const.* i. 33–38; *Eccl. Hist.* viii. 14; Zosim. *Hist. Nov.* lib. ii.

*Maxentius in the West.*

*His Superstition.*

The old chief Maximian, who on his son's usurpation had resumed the purple and the title of Augustus, and had been his main stay in military affairs, soon found his alliance unendurable, and took refuge with Constantine in Gaul. But the unhappy old man was a restless agitator. Twice detected in treason against his host and son-in-law—for Constantine had married his daughter Fausta, receiving with her as a dowry the coveted title of Augustus—he was allowed no other mercy than that of "free death," and perished ignominiously by his own hand.

*End of Maximian.*

Maxentius eagerly availed himself of this as a pretext for a quarrel. He hated Constantine intensely; and when the latter, with a zeal more creditable to his justice than to his humanity, followed up the death of his wife's father

*War Proclaimed.*

by erasing his titles, and throwing down his statues, the opportunity for a display of filial piety was considered too good to be neglected. Maxentius immediately gave orders, throughout Italy and North Africa, to overthrow the images of Constantine. In the contest that ensued, the latter did not wait to be attacked. With a promptitude and energy which entitle him to a high place among military leaders, he conducted his small army across the Cottian Alps; routed the best generals of Maxentius in several well-contested fields, and marching steadily and rapidly towards Rome, finally overwhelmed the usurper in a great battle under the walls of the city. Maxentius was found drowned in one of the marshes of the Tiber. Before he had left Rome for the decisive field, he had taken care to consult the Sibylline Books. *On that day*, ran the answer of the prudent oracle, *the enemy of the Romans shall perish.* The Romans indeed rejoiced that their enemy had perished; and the acclamations which greeted the conqueror were those of men who had nothing more to lose, and consequently everything to gain, from a change of masters.[23] All this happened about a year before the death of Maximin. It was followed by an alliance between Constantine and Licinius, and by a series of events in the East, already in part related.

*Victory of Constantine,* A.D. 312.

*End of Maxentius.*

Thus Constantine in the West and Licinius in the East, both of them favorably disposed towards the Christians, remained to divide the Roman world between them, or, if necessary, to contest the supremacy by a renewal of bloody strife.

*Constantine and Licinius.*

In the meanwhile, the almost forgotten Diocletian had lived long enough in his chosen retreat at Salona, to taste the bitter fruits of the seeds of tyranny he had sown. Whether he troubled himself with the afflictions of the Empire is by no means certain. At all events, no influence for good was allowed him. It is probable that he was soon made aware of the necessity of receiving passively and in silence whatever might befall him.

*Diocletian at Salona.*

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[23] Euseb. *Vita Constant.;* Zosimus, *Hist.* ii.

Valeria his daughter had been given in marriage to Galerius,[24] to whom she bore no children, but performed faithfully the duty of a mother to Candidianus, his illegitimate son. On the death of the Augustus, the beauty and wealth of the widowed Empress proved an irresistible bait to the brutal Maximin. But Valeria rejected his advances with becoming dignity. She was therefore sent into exile, with her property confiscated, her reputation blasted, her attendants subjected to the torture, and her female friends put to death on foul and false accusations. When tidings of this came to Diocletian, he ventured to entreat of the monster that his daughter might be suffered to share his retreat at Salona, and comfort his last moments. His humble petition was in vain. Afterwards, on the triumph of Licinius, a gleam of hope, founded on the debt of gratitude due from that conqueror to Galerius, induced the princess, accompanied by her mother, Prisca, to throw herself on his mercy and seek the protection of his court. She was the more easily led to this from learning that Candidianus was in favor there. She was soon undeceived. Candidianus, as also Severianus, the son of Severus, had imperial blood in them, and were therefore put to death. Fearing a similar fate, the two empresses fled, in the disguise of peasants. After fifteen months of wandering from place to place, all Asia the meanwhile resounding with their woes, they were at length discovered and recognized at Thessalonica. Their doom had been long since pronounced. In the presence of a great crowd of people, they were both beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the sea.

*Fate of his Wife and Daughter.*

*His Petition rejected.*

Such was the sad end of Diocletian's family. Of his own latter days little is known beyond an uncertain rumor that, maddened[25] by the ingratitude and neglect of all whom he had benefited, and by the pitiable fate of the few who might be supposed to have cherished some affection

*His own end,* A.D. 313.

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[24] Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* 39–41.

[25] Milman and Gibbon make light of the story of Diocletian's madness. Eusebius and Lactantius both mention it. The latter says that, after his long

for him, he withdrew from the troubles of life, as he had fled from those of empire, by a voluntary act. His death, however, has been attributed by some to dropsy, by some to poison, and by others to a protracted state of *insomnia*, in which he was unable to take food or rest.[26]

## CHAPTER X.

### THE VICTORY OF CONSTANTINE.

*Constantine takes the Christian side.*

The victory of Constantine was the beginning of the triumph of the Christian Religion. When he first announced the bold plan of attempting with hardly more than forty thousand available soldiers,[1] the conquest of Italy, defended by an army of at least four times the number, his friends remonstrated, and his officers could not refrain from murmurs of disapprobation.[2] But the boldness of this scheme was as nothing, compared with that which he was destined to undertake and to achieve. It was no less than to abjure the old traditions of the Empire, and to identify himself with an apparently broken and certainly unmilitary party, which neither in his army, nor in Italy, nor in Rome, nor in the Empire at large, was of

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illness previous to his abdication, *he revived, but not wholly; for at certain times he was insane*, but at other times in his senses. The humorous philosophy he displayed in his retirement, and his famous *bon mot*, that no man who can raise his own cabbages ought to covet the cares of empire, are not inconsistent with such intermittent insanity. Witty men are not necessarily sane men.

[26] Lactant. xlii.

[1] Zosimus gives him eighty thousand men in all; but, as Gibbon shows, not more than half that number could have been spared for the campaign in Italy.

[2] A heathen panegyrist says: "What God, what present Deity inspired thee, when almost all thy generals not only murmured in secret, but openly expressed their fears, against the advice of men, against the warnings of auspices," etc., etc.: "omnibus fere Comitibus et Ducibus, non solùm tacitè mussantibus, sed omen aperte timentibus."

any political importance; and which could nowhere claim to be more than a respectable minority of the population. To ascribe such a venture to mere political calculation, is to affirm a greater wonder than any of those recorded in legendary fiction. Nor can we set his conduct to the account of any deep affection for the Gospel, or for its persecuted followers. His life was hardly that of a true Christian man. Indeed, he never professed to be other than an outside pillar of the Church; and his baptism was deferred till just before his death. These things considered, Constantine's own account[3] of the matter seems more simple and more credible than any of the theories which have been framed in explanation of his extraordinary conduct.

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[3] Euseb. *De Vit. Constant.* i. 26–30, 36; Socrat. *Eccl. Hist.* i. 2. Lactantius mentions only that "Constantine was told in a dream to put the sign *on the arms* of his soldiers:" *De Mort. Pers.* 44; which is an addition, not a contradiction, to the story as related by Eusebius. So the heathen Nazarius, *in Panegyr. ad C.* 14: "It was bruited all through the Gauls, that *armies were seen* which declared they were divinely sent," etc.: which, again, is not a contradiction, but a popular exaggeration. Many modern critics, such as Milman, Neander, Gieseler, Schröckh, Manso, ascribe the wonder partly to excited imagination, partly to the appearance of some brilliant cross-like phenomenon in the heavens: a mode of explanation as hard to understand, and not a whit easier to believe, than the original simple facts as related by Constantine. It gives new names to things, however, and has the merit of being thought philosophical. As to Milman's and Mosheim's objection, that the story presents "the meek and peaceful Jesus" as "a God of battles"; there is a sufficient answer in Isaiah, xlv. 1–7. It is the Lord who "holds the right hand" of the conqueror, "to subdue nations before him," and to work deliverance for His people. God is in history, and in the world, as well as in Grace. It has also been urged, that if the appearance had been really supernatural, Constantine's conversion would have been more genuine than it seems to have been. But this is to mistake the operation of "signs and wonders." Their utmost effect is to *convince the mind* (as in the case of Simon Magus), not necessarily to convert the heart. As to the particular wonder under discussion, the position of the Church at that time was a *dignus vindice nodus.* Believers everywhere had been ten years (nay, three hundred years) crying to the Lord for deliverance. That the deliverance, when it came, should be signalized by extraordinary tokens of the Hand that wrought it, seems to me a rational as well as religious belief.

*His Course explained.*

*His Vision.*

*The Labarum.*

From his father Constantius and his mother Helena, and from his own observation of the terrible doom of those who had opposed themselves to the Gospel, he had imbibed as much of Christian faith as a liberal and sagacious, but not scrupulous, mind could be expected to receive. This was not much; but it was enough to make him ponder the weakness of human strength, and to pray for the support of an overruling Power. Maxentius, under the same circumstances, had resorted to horrible sacrifices and demoniacal incantations. Constantine, too enlightened for such superstitions, could only turn with vague desire, though with little of the faith that springs from love, towards the great Deity whose hand he recognized in the startling events of his times, the mysterious God of the Christians. It was then, according to his own testimony, that a wonderful vision was vouchsafed. About midday or a little after, there appeared in the heavens, just above the sun, the trophy of a Cross of light, bearing the inscription, By This Conquer. This was witnessed also by the whole army. In his sleep the night following, Christ appeared to him with the same sign, and commanded him to have a standard made in the same image, and to use it in all engagements against his enemies. In accordance with this instruction the far-famed *Labarum* was made; and when the conqueror entered Rome, his first act was to set up in that proud city the trophy of the Cross, surmounted by the ☧, so often conspicuous afterwards in the van of the Roman armies.

*Rome submits to the Cross.*

The readiness with which the Romans acquiesced in this momentous revolution, is not less wonderful than the boldness and decision with which it was brought about. That zeal for polytheism was by no means extinct in the great metropolis, had been recently shown by a furious outbreak in vindication of the honor of the popular goddess Fortuna. Some soldier, it appears, had uttered a word depreciatory of the idol.[4] It had required the utmost efforts of Maxentius to put an end to the tumult that ensued. But on the entrance of Constantine into the city, this zeal for paganism seems suddenly to have died away. Amid a general approbation, a sect never strong in numbers, generally disliked, and for three hundred years depressed, whose foremost Bishop had lately been forced to act the part of groom[5] in the imperial stables, is suddenly elevated to the height of power; the traditions of a thousand years or more are quietly set aside; and an entirely new order of things is triumphantly initiated.

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[4] Whether this soldier was a Christian is not mentioned: Losim. *Hist.* ii. 13.

*General Rejoicing.*

However all this may be explained by political or philosophic reasons, it is not to be wondered at that the Christians should have regarded it in the light of a great deliverance; a divine intervention the more welcome that it came at their hour of utmost need. And such undoubtedly was their universal feeling. From one end of Christendom to the other there was one harmonious cry: The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we rejoice! Even the cold and phlegmatic historian of the period, the cautious and (if all reports be true) timorous Eusebius,[6] was warmed up into a glow of sympathetic feeling. His Panegyric on the Rebuilding of the Churches shows, in its very extravagance of language, that the joy of the day could be content with no moderate expressions. The general delight, in fact, was a sort of intoxication. The cry was no longer, "We have heard with our ears what our forefathers have told us;" but, "As we have heard *so have we seen* in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God." The destruction, root and branch, within so short a space of time, of so many powerful oppressors, could not but create a feeling of awe and admiration. And, happily, this feeling was one in which the heathen could take part. They had been sufferers with the Christians; they had reason to rejoice with them. They could join in the exulting cry:[7] "Where now are the mighty names so famous among the nations? Where are the Jovii and Herculii, titles so insolently assumed by Diocles and Maximian, and so pitifully disgraced by their infamous successors? The Lord

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[5] Such is said to have been the punishment of Pope Marcellus: Anastas. *Vit. Marcell.* Eusebius refers to this or some similar case in *Mart. of Palest.* xii.

[6] Eusebius, surnamed Pamphilus, and known as "the father of Church history," was not only a man of great industry and learning, with every facility for acquiring a just knowledge of the events he describes, but singularly cautious, skeptical, without a spark of the dangerous light of genius, and little in harmony with the enthusiasm of the age in which he lived. Born in Palestine about the year 259, and educated in the latitudinarian school of Origen and his disciples, he kept within the pale of orthodoxy, but sympathized with those who were out of the pale. He was imprisoned during the great persecution; but having been let off without scars, he was both privately suspected and publicly accused (on insufficient grounds, however) of having purchased his immunity by dishonorable concessions. When the peace came he was made Bishop of Cæsarea. In the Arian strife he shuffled a little, but finally subscribed to the Nicene Creed. He was a favorite of Constantine, and on the deposition of Eustathius of Antioch was offered that See; but prudently declined the dangerous honor. On the whole, judging him, not by the severe rule of the early Church, but by a charity fifteen hundred years older and

*Causes of Joy to the Heathen.*

proportionately more indulgent, he was a moderate and prudent, and (so far as we can judge) a pious and good man. His credit as a historian deservedly stands high. His prejudices were for the most part against that party, which finally proved dominant in the Church; and where they come in, he has not the rhetorical skill to conceal them. His way of relating Constantine's vision and similar wonders, shows that credulity was not among his failings. Gibbon objects to him, that in two places of his history, he avows an intention to record only the transactions that he deemed creditable to the Church. Whoever will read those passages (Lib. viii. 2, and *Mart. of Palest.* 12) will see that he merely declines to *particularize* certain scandals, which, however, he fully mentions in the gross, and in a way more damaging on the whole, than if he had given the details. His care to apprise the reader when he omits any facts of that kind, is a strong proof his scrupulous fidelity; and it would be an improvement on the general character of history, if all historians were to adopt the same rule.

[7] Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* l. lii. The abominable character of these tyrants as described by the two Church historians is fully borne out by the heathen Zosimus: *Hist.* ii. It is remarkable, by the way, that Gibbon and Milman, who take every opportunity to discredit the two Church historians refer to Zosimus—whose fanatical hatred of Christianity leads him to the most absurd statements—without a word of censure or of caution. See Gibbon, ch. xvi., and Milman's notes.

hath destroyed them and wiped them from the earth. It is the Lord's triumph, the victory of the Lord. He hath looked down upon the earth. His flock, torn and scattered by ravening wolves, He hath brought together and healed. The wicked beasts, which trampled down His pastures and dissipated his folds, He hath utterly exterminated!" It was, in fact, a triumph of humanity. And if Christians carefully collected the particulars of the horrible end of the oppressors, "lest either they should be forgotten, or lest some future historian should corrupt the truth, by passing over in silence their sins against God, and God's judgments upon them;" and if in this we can discern a little excess of natural exultation: it is but just to bear in mind that the early Christians were men of like passions with ourselves, but tried in a way that passes our experience, and almost our conceptions. The real wonder is, that a triumph so great, so sudden, and so unexpected, led to no acts of violent reprisal. A victory of such magnitude, and yet so little abused, is nowhere else recorded in the history of mankind.

*Exultation natural and excusable.*

At the present day, we can see that this first victory of Christianity was not so much a fulfilment, as a type or earnest, of that subjection of the kingdoms of the world, which after so many ages of varied conflict is still but a matter of patient faith and hope. It was not the end of war. It was the beginning of a new and more complicated struggle. As, in the first victorious stage of the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had only to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,"[8] but in later stages were obliged to use their own arms; or, as in the conquest of the seven nations, Jericho the type-city was taken without a blow from man, but, in the capture of Ai and other places the People—having corrupted themselves by taking of "the accursed thing"[9]—were compelled to resort continually to the use of human weapons: so it has proved in the militant progress of the Church. The first great victory was a free gift of God: a victory of simple faith. The people stood

*The Victory an earnest only.*

[8] Exod. xiv. 13.

[9] Josh. vii.

*A Warfare of Mixed Elements.*

still and saw the Lord work. They quietly waited till the bulwarks of Roman heathenism crumbled and fell before them. But since that time, corrupted more or less with the wealth of the first conquest, it has been comparatively a warfare of mixed elements. human strength, human policy, spoils of Ai, snares of Gibeon, and that root of all the evil "the Babylonish garment," concealing as it were the Lord's arm from view, and making the Church almost undistinguishable from the world.

*Signs of a New Era.*

The symptoms of this change were not slow in appearing. Almost the first greeting that came to the weak faith, or to the politic calculations of the victor, was from a broken and distracted Christianity. The mad schism of the Donatists appealed to an earthly conqueror to settle spiritual disputes.[10] The most desperate and bloody wars[11] that troubled Constantine's reign were levied against him in the name of the religion he had adopted. Similar difficulties encountered Licinius in the East; and, if he had any faith, contributed to shake it.

*Licinius led to favor Christianity.*

This latter Emperor, in his contest with Maximin previously narrated, had inclined to the Christian cause from motives similar to those by which Constantine had been determined. He could put no confidence in the gods of Galerius and Maxentius. An alliance with Constantine, cemented by a marriage with his sister Constantia, which took place at Milan not long after the overthrow of Maxentius, helped to commit him more decidedly in the same direction. In addition to this, he is said to have had a dream just before his decisive battle with Maximin, which induced him to pray to the Most High, and in His Name to cope with an army twice the number of his own. However this may be, his victory was followed by edicts,[12] not merely of toleration, but of the most ample restitution. Churches, cemeteries, and property of all kinds were to be restored fully and without delay. In return, Christians were to pray that the Divine favor, already so signally experienced by the Emperor, might be continued for all time to him and his successors.

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[10] Constantine's edict, on this occasion, is given with many others in Euseb. *Eccl. Hist.* lib. x.

[11] The violence of the Circumcelliones and the religious wars in Africa are vividly described in Milman's *Hist. of Christianity*, iii. 1. In addition to the Donatist trouble, there was the schism of Meletius, with the outbreak of Arianism, quarrels among the Bishops, and innumerable other troubles, to shake the faith of a new convert. The divine caution, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be *offended* in Me," was never more needed than in the moment of the first great victory.

*Edicts of Restitution*, A.D. 313.

The war that soon broke out from the mutual jealousy of the two Emperors, put an end for the time being to this happy state of things.[13] Constantine's vigor proved superior, in two fiercely contested battles, to the tried skill and more numerous forces of his veteran adversary. A hollow peace ensued. The victor was confirmed in his allegiance to Christianity. The vanquished, sorely galled by his defeat, and irritated continually by the praises too lavishly bestowed upon his rival, began to hate the cause which self-interest alone had induced him to take up. His wrath was freely vented upon the Churches and the Clergy. He accused them of praying for Constantine more earnestly than for him. Persecution began once more to lower upon the East. The assemblies of the faithful appeared again in the light of conspiracies. Synods were forbidden. Even the favorite work of charity, the ministering to those in prison, could be performed only at the risk of sharing the doom of malefactors. In some places, Churches were demolished. In others, Bishops were made away with in secret. In short, Maxi-

*War between the two Emperors*, A.D. 315.

*New Outrages.*

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[12] Lactant. *De Mort. Pers.* xlviii.; Euseb. x. 5. The edict from Milan had been drawn up previously to the victory over Maximin, but was not put forth in the East till after that event. As the one given by Euseb. refers to a previous one not extant, Licinius probably made some additions to the original drawn up at Milan.

[13] Zosimus lays the blame of this war to the perfidy and ambition of Constantine. On such points party prejudices were too strong to allow us, in cases where motives are concerned, to attach much weight to the testimony of either heathen or Christian writers.

min and Maxentius seemed to have revived in the person of an old man more able than those tyrants, but not less cruel or licentious. At length a breach with Constantine, in which the latter perhaps made zeal for Christianity a cloak for his own ambitious views, accompanied with prodigious preparations both by sea and land, threatened the exhaustion of what remained of the resources of the Empire. Constantine proved once more victorious. The great battle of Hadrianople shattered the land forces of Licinius. The siege and capture of Byzantium involved the ruin of his navy. A vigorous rally was followed by an overwhelming defeat at Chrysopolis, now called Scutari; and the flight and ignominious submission of the tyrant, with his pardon at the instance of Constantia his wife, proved but the forerunners of his summary execution, on such pleas of state necessity as a victorious monarch is seldom at a loss to find.

*Second War.*

*End of Licinius, A.D. 324.*

Such was the end of Diocletian's policy. After thirty-seven years of divided rule, with incalculable losses, horrors, and calamities, the Roman world was once more united, and the first Christian Emperor reigned with universal and undivided sway.

*Constantine sole Emperor.*

Constantine attributed his victory, as usual, to the power of the Deity of the Christians. And this, so far as we have the means of judging, was for awhile at least the sum of his religion. His clear and hardy intellect, thoroughly awake (as was the case with the heathen mind in general[14]) to a sense of that awful Nemesis which rules in the affairs of dynasties and nations, had been led to identify this great and mysterious power with the cause of a universally hated and per-

*He gives God the Glory.*

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[14] The reader of Homer, Herodotus, Æschylus, and even Plutarch, knows how deep and real was this belief in a Divine Power of retribution, sure-footed though sometimes slow, among the ancient heathen. It was the Divine Witness in the heathen conscience to the unity of the Godhead. The barrenness of mind which recognizes no Providence in History, no controlling Power, is peculiar to modern unbelief; and is conceivable only under such circumstances as those alluded to in the Epistle to the Hebrews, v. 4–8. For some interesting facts on Constantine's belief, see Gieseler, § 56.

*His Rule of Action.*

secuted sect. He had in some way perceived that the power of Divine retribution was on their side. Their God was more mighty than the gods of the persecutors. This he saw as a simple fact; and to that fact as seen in the sphere of political enterprise he readily submitted. Having always believed—to use his own expression—"that the best and noblest course of action is, before anything is undertaken, *to provide as far as possible for a secure result*," he watched the almighty Hand which was then shaping the world's destiny, and that Hand he followed as the only sufficient pledge of security and success.

*Intellectual Faith.*

*Trials and Sorrows.*

Such a faith, sometimes degenerating into a mere fatalism, and sometimes rising to the height of a sublime confidence in God, is characteristic of all great instruments of political or social revolutions; and is consistent with gross ignorance of the Gospel and gross negligence of its precepts. Men of this kind are often hard, shrewd, and selfish in all secondary matters. But in view of the great ends of their vocation, they are unsparing of themselves, enthusiastic and even fanatical, seldom descending to the littleness of prudential calculations on their own account. Their private character, therefore, is always more or less of an enigma. In the case of Constantine, his later years were subject to a series of Divine visitations, which, so far as we may reverentially look into the secret purposes of God, seem to have been intended to lead him from a political into a personal knowledge of the Truth; and which, we may charitably hope, were not without effect. The Nemesis which he dreaded, and which in State affairs he so carefully propitiated, was allowed to enter his own house.[15] Dark crimes and darker judgments caused his palace

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[15] See Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, ch. xviii.; Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* iv. 60–64. It is instructive to contrast the Life of Constantine by the courtly Bishop of Cæsarea, with the simple inspired records, transcripts as it were from the Book of the recording Angel, of the lives of Solomon and David. Eusebius is all eulogy. We feel, nevertheless, that he belittles his hero by his fulsome praises. On the other hand, what dignity of character beams through

*His End.*

to be haunted with horrors worthy of the old tragic drama; and the life, which rose with so stern a beauty upon the profligate Roman world,[16] went down amid a gloom, in which a late baptism, and perhaps a genuine though late repentance, are the only evidence of a hope in keeping with the faith so long professed.

*The Type of a New Age.*

But these are questions which history is incompetent to settle. Constantine was simply a great instrument in the hand of God. To God he gave the glory, by a firm advocacy of the Gospel, if not in the better way of a consistent Christian life. He stands, therefore, as not merely the introducer, but in some sort the type, of that new era of Church growth, in which, while the root of faith remained, its true development was to be mixed, and almost inextricably entangled, with the weeds and thorns and tares of the elements of the world. In him began, in short, the great problem and enigma of our modern Christendom, our modern civilization.

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the blotted history of those ancient Hebrew kings! If Constantine's crimes and faults had been as honestly given by Eusebius, we should probably have found more to admire in him than we can now find warrant for. There is a counterpoise, however, to the extravagant eulogies of Eusebius, in the elegant lampoon (entitled history) of the fanatical heathen Zosimus: *Historiæ Novæ*, etc.

[16] Among the virtues conceded to him, chastity is prominent; among his vices, cruelty. Considering the fearful profligacy of the times, a man in his position could hardly maintain the former of these, without falling more or less into the latter.

# BOOK IV.

# FROM THE OUTBREAK OF ARIANISM
TO THE
DOWNFALL OF HEATHENISM.

A.D. 319–394.

# Book IV.

## CHAPTER I.

### ARIUS AND HIS DOCTRINE.

A new trouble. A.D. 319.

It was in the nineteenth year of the fourth century of our era, amid the peace which Constantine's victory had given to the Church, that a little spark fell among the inflammatory elements of Greek Christianity; and the flames of a new controversy, destined to burn on for ages, spread almost instantaneously from Alexandria into the rest of Egypt, Libya, the Upper Thebes, Palestine, Syria, and the provinces of Asia Minor.[1]

*Arius and Alexander.*

The evil, it is said, first broke out in the following manner: Alexander, the learned successor of Achillas in the See of Alexandria, whose election has already been mentioned,[2] had, on a certain occasion, assembled his clergy about him, for mutual edification in some of the deeper mysteries of Christian doctrine. The subject for the day was the Majesty and Unity of the Sacred Trinity. On this high theme the Bishop enlarged, possibly in a style savoring somewhat of a fondness for mystical phraseology, more certainly with a marked warmth and earnestness of manner: this latter being inspired by his knowledge of the fact that erroneous views on the subject had already crept in, and were secretly favored by a man, the foremost in point of logical ability, and the most influential in position, of all the Alexandrine clergy. Arius, the parish priest of the church called Baucalis,[3] was manifestly aimed at in this discourse. He felt the edge of the allusion. He thought he saw in it, moreover, a favorable opportunity to avow himself. The Bishop, in his zealous assertion of the *oneness* of the Father and the Son, seemed to have confounded the persons of the Trinity; and Arius, under cover of a righteous indignation against that heresy, might advance his own opinions without rebuke. Accordingly he threw off his habitual reserve, and uttered his mind to the assembled presbyters.

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[1] For sources of Church History see Dowling's excellent *Introduction to the Critical Study of Ecclesiastical History*, London, 1838; also, Gieseler's *Church History*, Smith's American edition. The authorities most immediately necessary are the *Greek Ecclesiastical Historians*—Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius, Philostorgius, Theodorus Lector—*Græce et Latine*, in iii. Tomm., Cantabrig., 1720; also, the first five of these in English (somewhat inaccurately translated), in six volumes, Baxter & Sons, London.

[2] P. 298.

*Arius avows himself.*

*Arian Tenets.*

"If the Father," he reasoned,[4] "verily begat the Son, He that begat must have been *anterior* to Him that was begotten. Once it must have been, that the Father was, and *the Son was not.* The Father alone is *unoriginate;* the Son, therefore, must have been originate; He must have had a beginning, He must have come into being *out of no-being.* In short, though the first-born of creation, and immeasurably exalted as being *alone created by the Father,* He is not *of* the Father—in the sense of emanation, or issue, or expansion, or division of substance—but was brought into existence by the Father's *will,* and is consequently *a creature.*"

*The Son subject to change.*

These sentiments were met at first with murmurs of disapprobation, but without any attempt at formal discussion. At a later meeting of the clergy, the matter was taken up more warmly, and Arius having repeated his assertions, some one is said to have asked him,

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[3] Sozomen, i. 15.

[4] Socrates, *History*, i. 5; Epistles of Alexander, Arius, and Eusebius, in Theod. *History*, i. 4–6; Arius's *Thalia*, in S. Athan. *c. Arian.* Orat. ii. 9; S. Epiphan. *Hæres.* 69; Gieseler's *Ch. Hist.* § 81, n. 2, Smith's Am. ed.; Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century.*

"Do you mean, then, that the Son is, like Satan, susceptible of change?" He answered, "The Son, being begotten and created, there is naught in His *nature* to prevent His changing: but it is ever His *will* to choose only good." This put the heresy in a form which fell with a great shock upon the Church mind; so that Arius afterwards saw fit to keep the statement in the background,[5] and by the majority of his followers it was always carefully evaded.

*Cautious statements.*

The same pressure of public opinion compelled him, in like manner, to soften other sharp points of his doctrine. "The Son is a creature, yet *not as one of the creatures*: though once He was not, yet *He was begotten before all times*." There was an effort, in other words, to assign to the Son of God a nature intermediate between that of the Creator and that of the creature: an effort which would never have been made had it not been necessary to satisfy, at least in appearance, the strong faith in His Deity that everywhere prevailed among Christian people.

*Arian Logic.*

*The Accidental mistaken for the Essential.*

The question being once fairly opened, the Catholics were not slow in detecting the abuse of logic by which the Arian tenets were supported. It was a reasoning from analogy; but, as was rightly urged, it omitted the point of the analogy really applicable, in favor of a merely secondary and incidental point. That a son is born *after* his father is a relation of time, applicable to man because man is a creature of time. Such a relation cannot be applied to Him who has His dwelling in eternity. But that a son is *of* his father, begotten in his image, the inheritor of his nature, whatever that nature may be, is an essential relation, as proper to heavenly and eternal, as to temporal and earthly, existence. When Arius, therefore, contended for the relation expressed by the word *after*, and objected to that which the word *of* implies, he did something more than put forth a heresy: he started a new way of thinking, which, if once admitted, would endanger every article of the Christian faith.

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[5] See the Letters of Alexander and Arius, Theod. i. 4, 5.

The same may be said of his more subtle argument, that the Son owed His existence to the *will* of God, and that the Father must have been before He willed the Son to be. Such an assertion would imply that God had a being *before* He had a will: which, again, is an introduction into the Godhead of the idea of time—a manifest denial of the Divine perfection.

*The idea of Time introduced into the Godhead.*

Arius had better ground to go on, but availed himself of it in a cavilling spirit, when he diverted the controversy into attacks upon certain *theories* current in the Church, not sanctioned, indeed, nor yet formally condemned, by which theologians had endeavored to bring the mystery of the Trinity more neatly within the grasp of philosophic thought. Such, for example, were the ideas of *emanation*, *expansion*, *issue*, *division*, and the like.[6] Such, again, was the distinction between the *immanent* and the *forthgoing* Word; or, as otherwise phrased, the Word *silent* and the Word *speaking*. As mere analogies or illustrations, efforts to compare things spiritual with spiritual, such phrases might be used without serious harm; if pressed too literally, however, as they sometimes were, they might easily be perverted into dangerous errors.

*False Theories in the Church attacked by Arius.*

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[6] Many theologians of the first three centuries were open to attack on this point; see Book II. ch. 7, § viii. of this History. Gieseler remarks that even the Nicene Creed sanctions the theory of *emanation*—" God *of* God, Light *of* Light," etc. It is to be borne in mind, however, that in using such analogies, the Fathers acknowledged their insufficiency, and guarded their hearers against understanding them in any mere physical sense. Inadequate expression of the Truth is not heresy: heresy involves both inadequate and *contradictory* language. *Uncharitableness* or captiousness is at its root. For this reason S. Athanasius—a model of charity in the true sense of the word—in defending particular expressions sanctioned by Church use, deemed it enough to show that such expressions were *capable* of a sound meaning: for if they were capable of such a meaning, it were malicious to interpret them otherwise. In the same spirit, S. Alexander (in his Epistle, Theod. i. 4) says, " Terms . . . . are not adequate to express the Divinity . . . . of the Only-Begotten Son. They were used by holy men who vainly endeavored to clear up the mystery, and who . . . . *informed their hearers that the subject was far beyond their powers.*"

When Arius, therefore, attacked such expressions, he gained the sympathy of some thoughtful and learned men. On the other hand, some, in a spirit of blind opposition, looked with favor upon everything that he assailed: an error which gave rise to almost as many heresies as can be traced to the source of Arianism proper.

*Appeal to Holy Writ.*

There was a further complication arising from the boldness of the arch heretic in appealing to the language of Holy Writ, and from his artful handling of those texts which affirm either the Divinity or the Divine attributes of the Son of God.

*The higher and lower Sense.*

All language, of course, is capable of a secondary or improper, as well as of a proper, meaning: it may be taken in a higher or in a lower sense. Thus when the young man in the Gospel saluted our Lord as "*good* Master," he meant it, no doubt, in the lower sense of the word, and could, therefore, apply it to a human teacher; but it was intimated to him that, in its proper sense, and according to the fulness of its meaning, the salutation was suitable to none but God. The Church acted on this hint in her mode of interpreting the Scriptures generally. Terms descriptive of the nature or person of Christ were taken instinctively in their highest sense;[7] and when these terms were drawn from filial or other human relations, and were applicable therefore only by way of analogy, the maxim, "Man like God, not God like man," became the principle and guide of interpretation. Lower relations are images of the higher, not the higher of the lower. Earthly things and names are shadows and figures: substance and reality must be sought in heaven. The Catholics, therefore, acknowledging even men to be "sons" or "images" of God, and, therefore, in a lower sense, "gods," gave a larger meaning to such words, in proportion as, aban-

*The highest Sense found in Christ.*

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[7] The leading thought of this paragraph, which I have given (perhaps) too concisely, is fully brought out in Newman's *Arians*, etc., chap. ii. sec. v. Abundant illustration of it can be found in S. Athanasius, *Nicæn. Defens.* Oxf. Trans Part i.; Library of the Fathers.

doning every corporeal thought, they ascended in the scale of being,[8] so that when they came up to "*the* Son, *the* Image," they could be content with nothing short of the most full, most exalted, most spiritual idea the terms were capable of.

*Arian principle of Interpretation.*

Arius introduced a mode of interpretation which entirely set at naught this wholesome rule. He made the lower application of names and words the measure of the meaning of the higher.[9] "If Christ is *the Son* of God, so are angels His sons. If Christ is *the power* of God, even the locusts in one place are called His power. If the Father *begat* the Son, He is said also to have begotten the drops of dew." This was to say, in other words, that because the names of Christ apply in a secondary sense to things earthly, which are images of Him their Creator, therefore they must be so applied to things heavenly; an argument as fallacious as if one were to reason that because we sometimes call the sunshine simply "the sun," therefore the latter word means only "sunshine," even when we apply it to the solar orb.

*Its necessary Result.*

The inevitable result of such corrosive logic was to void the Scriptures of all value as a positive revelation. It was, in fact, to cut away the whole ground of faith. For "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." But if the very word by which faith in Christ cometh, has no primary and proper application to Him, but may equally well be interpreted in any grade of its lower sense, then there is no sure revelation, no ascertainable truth, and consequensly there can be no rational belief. All is reduced to the uncertainty of opinion, conjecture, and vague interpretation.

*Its Import.*

These remarks seem necessary at this juncture of Church History, in order to direct attention to an essential feature of that long departure from the line of orthodoxy, which Arius began, but which, under other forms and names, continued to vex the Church for ages after.

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[8] *Nicæn. Defens.* § 24.

[9] Letter of Alexander, Theod. i. 4. The invention of the sophism quoted in the text is attributed to Asterius, though all the Arians seem to have used it. See *Nicæn. Defens.* § 20.

*Arianism an alien Mind.*

It was not, like many of the preceding and accompanying heresies, an erroneous theory merely, a foolish and vain attempt to explain the great mystery of the Three in One. It was an introduction into the Church of *an alien mind:* an application to the creeds and Scriptures of a logical instrument, which, without affecting the form of either, could quietly cut away their substance and meaning.[10] The controversy, therefore, was eminently a sifting of the heart and mind. Forcing men back from the letter of truth to the spirit, it brought home to each bosom the searching question, "What *think* ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" It was this which gave to the heresy its Protean facility in changing shapes: it was this which enabled it, under innumerable shifts and evasions, to maintain so long a struggle in the bosom of the Church. No strife is so obstinate as that in which the combatants, while seeming to have everything, have in reality nothing, in common.

*Person of Arius.*

The person and character of the great heresiarch have come down to us in descriptions in which, with some allowance for the coloring infused by hostile fancy, it is easy to discern a consistent portrait. Of a tall and gaunt, but not ungainly, figure, a face thin and sallow, marked by the lines of thought, and an eye which had a peculiar gleam of what some considered saintliness, and others fanaticism or even insanity, he was austere in his habits, and of a disposition naturally melancholy and self-absorbed. His talk is described as sweet, insinuating, and exerting an influence akin to fascination. When thoroughly aroused, he spoke as a man under a spell, and the spell communicated itself to those who heard him. At other times he was cold and shy, and uncommunicative; as ready to dissemble his opinions as, in a different frame of mind, he was rash in their avowal. His enemies describe him as excessively ambitious, inwardly corroded by the greed of power. On the contrary, Philostorgius[11] declares that he shrank from publicity and honor; so that he voluntarily gave place to Alexander when the two were competitors for the Episcopal chair. This latter opinion is countenanced by the fact that his prominence in controversy was only occasional; while he soon lost the leadership of the heresy that bore his name. He gave it birth and form: the fostering care of it devolved upon abler and worse men.

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[10] S. Athanasius dwells much on this; showing that the Arian mind was *Judaic*, captious, evasive. See, *e. g.*, the *Ep. in Defence of Nic. Def.* (Oxf. Trans. ch. i.). The *Letter* of Eusebius (Socrat. i. 8) is one of the most subtle specimens of this kind of evasion.

*Opposite views of his Character.*

A man of the general character above described may become a mystic or a sceptic, or both of these in turn. The early associations of Arius, at Antioch, in the school of Lucian, and the training he had there received in the Aristotelian method of disputation, committed him effectually to the line of scepticism. Keen, clever, self-absorbed, unimaginative, and unsympathetic; incapable of regarding, much more of appreciating, any other point of view than his own; he was a hater of all mystery in philosophy and religion: a feeling aggravated, perhaps, but not justified, by the decided tendency in Egypt towards the opposite extreme. Thus he denied the *eternal generation,* on the ground that it was incomprehensible. He did not reflect that the *creation of the Son out of nothing* is just as much of a mystery, and fully as hard for reason to explain. There was a similar inconsistency in his complaints against the Catholics for expressing their belief in words other than those found in Scripture.

*His Training at Antioch.*

So far as he had any positive theory of the Trinity, it corresponded to that of the New Platonic school:[12] for which reason he was taunted with being a follower of Porphyry, the well known philosophic enemy of Christian truth. At a time when the Church was absorbing the broken ranks of the heathen schools, there was infinite danger from this class of thinkers. The treasures of Greek learning—"the spoils of the Egyptians"—might be used, indeed, to adorn the Tabernacle of Truth: but they might with still greater ease be converted into "golden calves," the symbols of a heathenism more subtle and intellectual, but not less dangerous, than the older and grosser forms of creature-worship.

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[11] The work of Philostorgius, the Arian historian, is preserved in a compendium by Photius; who introduces each extract with the cautionary phrase, "Thus says that liar," or, "that most impious of liars, Philostorgius."

[12] It has been abundantly proved by modern and ancient writers, that the New Platonic Trinity, itself a combination of the ideas of three leading schools, corresponds to the Arian, not the Catholic, dogma. See De Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire*, etc., vol. ii., Eclaircissement A.; Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Cent.* chap. i., sect. iv.; Cudworth's *Intellect. System*, Book I. chap. iv. § 36; Brucker, *Hist. Philos.* tom. ii. *de Sect. Eclect.* §§ li. lii.

*His dogma Platonic.*

It was, doubtless, an earnest sense of the danger in this direction, that gave such intensity to the Catholic feeling against Arianism. Externally considered, the heresy differed little from the doctrine commonly received. It acknowledged the Scriptures; it waged no war against the order or worship of the Church; no form of confession was in common use which it was not ready to subscribe: in short, it conceded to the Son of God all the practical adoration which had been rendered Him from the beginning. The faithful felt, nevertheless, that even in this last point, in yielding Divine honors to one who was declared to be a creature only,[13] Arius had taken a fatal step downward towards polytheism: while his mode of arguing and denying, his shallow and one-sided philosophy, and, in short, his whole tone and temper of mind, were essentially heathenish, infidel, and atheistic. Hence the extreme bitterness of the controversy that the Arian heresy provoked.

*Its tendency heathen.*

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[13] "For it was fitting that the redemption should take place through none other than Him who is the Lord by nature, *lest we should name another Lord, and fall into the Arian and Greek folly.*" See Oxf. Trans. of S. Athanas. against Arian. pp. 129, 141, 292, 301, 303.

## CHAPTER II.

### ARIUS, ALEXANDER, AND CONSTANTINE.

THE controversy mentioned in the preceding chapter was not followed by any immediate action on the Bishop's part. Arius went on unmolested, teaching publicly and in private the tenets he had avowed; for the diffusion of which his position as pastor of the principal church in the city, as an authorized preacher, and as the head, it would appear, of the catechetical school, gave him every advantage he could well desire. His example was soon followed by other teachers, such as Colluthus, Carponas, and Sarmatas: the first of whom, in a fit of indignation at the tolerance extended to "heresy," broke off from communion with the Bishop and organized a sect called after their own name. The amiable prelate still temporized, in hopes of confining the evil within the precincts of the city. He even held meetings for the free discussion of the points of difference, listening to both sides,[1] it is said, and "applauding sometimes the one party and sometimes the other."

*Progress o' the Heresy.*

*Sect of Colluthus.*

That an end came at length to this impolitic delay was due, in all probability, to the counsels of a young man, a member of the household of Alexander, known at that time as the Deacon Athanasius. About twenty years old and of a slight and puny frame, a mere "mannikin" as his enemies[2] at a later day called him, he had already given signs of a mental and moral superiority from which great things were expected.

*The Deacon Athanasius.*

According to a story that comes to us on respectable author-

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[1] Sozom. i. 15.

[2] Julian: *Epistol.* 51. Gregory Nazianzen, however, speaks of him as *angelical* in person: *Orat.* xxi. 9.

*His early Life.*

*Arius condemned,* A.D. 321.

ity,[3] he was first brought to notice in a singular way. The Bishop, one day, saw a group of children on the sea-shore, imitating, in sport, the rite of Baptism. The child Athanasius officiated as Bishop. Alexander was at first sight shocked; but so great was the seriousness and dignity with which the young ministrant performed the sacred office, that the good-natured prelate could not find in his heart to annul the act. He recognized the children as duly baptized, and took their young leader into his house to train him for Holy Orders. The disciple proved worthy of the confidence of his master. Already before the outbreak of the Arian troubles he had written with marked ability a Tract against the Gentiles, and an Essay on the Doctrine of the Incarnation. But the new heresy awakened and consecrated all the energies of his soul. He saw in it at once a blasphemy against Christ and a denial of the Gospel. He opposed it with the utmost decision; and it was owing in the main to his sagacious and energetic counsels that the Church of Alexandria took at length a decided stand. First, Alexander and the city presbyters, then a provincial Synod of about one hundred bishops from Egypt and Libya, anathematized Arius and his principal adherents. Among those condemned were five deacons, six presbyters, and two of episcopal rank, Secundus and Theonas.

*The seed widely sown.*

But to cut down a weed after it has seeded, is to give it additional facilities for growth. Arius, indeed, withdrew from Alexandria, but he left busy agents behind him: women of all classes, and especially large numbers of the Sacred Virgins,[4] having attached themselves to him with all the ardor of their sex. He had emissaries, in like manner, throughout Egypt and Libya. In Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, the ground had been prepared for his doctrine by the heresies of the third century;[5] and in the numerous sees held by Collucianists,[6] as the disciples of Lucian were called, there were efficient co-workers ready to his hand. Among others, Eusebius, the Church historian, the metropolitan of Cæsarea, lent a willing ear to his plausible complaints, and wrote in his behalf to the Bishop of Alexandria. His cause was more earnestly taken up by another Eusebius, the courtly Bishop of Nicomedia. In short, Arius could boast, whith some show of reason, that "all the prelates of the East, except such illiterate men[7] as the Bishops of Antioch, Tripoli, and Jerusalem," were more or less favorably disposed towards him.

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[3] Socrat. i. 15. The story presents chronological difficulties, which are not, however, altogether insuperable: De Broglie, I. i. ch. iii.

[4] Epiphanius says 700 Virgins. *Hæres.* lxix. 1.

[5] Book II. ch. vii., and Book III. ch. v., vi., of this History.

*Bishops favorable to Arius.*

Where he could not insinuate his heresy, he took care to secure sympathy as a victim of persecution. Alexander endeavored to undo the mischief by a circular epistle to his colleagues, stating the true grounds of the quarrel. But his tardy intervention added fuel to the flame. Innumerable letters passed to and fro, the Bishop himself, it is said, having written more than seventy in the course of one month; and wherever these missives fell, they were carefully gathered up by the one side or the other, and kept for further use in the controversy.[8] As was natural, the Meletians and other sects increased the confusion, arraying themselves for the most part on the side of Arius.

*Letters to and fro.*

What was vastly more mischievous, the controversy soon became popular, and wrangling resounded on every side.[9] Shopkeepers discussed the mysteries of the creed furiously over their wares. The populace railed at one another in the language of theology. Households were divided on the question, Whether the Son *was* before he was begotten; or argued in noisy debates that "Peter and Paul, had they made

*Popular Excitement.*

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[6] Theod. i. 4, 5.

[7] "They will not admit that any of our fellow-ministers possess even mediocrity of intelligence . . . . . the true doctrines, they say, have never entered the minds of any but themselves." Alexander's letter, Theod. i. 4. This boast of learning, wit, enlightened views, etc., marked the Eusebian or Arian party.

[8] Socrat. i. 6.

[9] Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* iii. 4; Socrat. i. 6; Theod. i. 4, 6.

sufficient efforts, might have attained a filiation equal to that of their Lord." The heathen took part in the general scandal. The squabbles of Christians were mimicked in theatres. It was a time of rebuke and blasphemy, from the blame of which neither of the two parties was altogether free, though the infamy of ministering directly to the frivolous temper of the crowd seems to attach chiefly to the name of Arius. To make his tenets popular, he strung them together in loose verses, after the manner of a low comic poet, called Sotades, and entitled the vile production the *Thalia*—a name commonly given to songs sung at feasts. He also wrote hymns, which he set to light airs, for millers, for sailors, for travellers by land or by water.

*The* Thalia *of Arius.*

The Emperor Constantine, whose interest in Church affairs had steadily increased, notwithstanding the trouble and annoyance he had experienced from them, first learned of the difficulties in the East during his stay in Nicomedia, just after the great victory over his rival, Licinius. The advantage of a first hearing was on the side of the Arians. Eusebius, the crafty prelate of the Eastern capital, had written letters, holden councils, and made appeals in all directions, in their behalf. Constantia, the Emperor's sister and the widow of Licinius, was a devoted follower of Eusebius. Both of these had access to the court, and neither of them was likely to leave the opportunity unimproved.

*The Emperor interposes,* A.D. 323.

However this may have been, the emperor's emotions on hearing of the affair were those of grief as a Christian, of disappointment and vexation as a statesman. He had been sufficiently troubled, he declared, with the scandals and confusion of the Donatist schism in North Africa; and when his efforts had failed to find in the Western Church a suitable arbiter of that quarrel, he had confidently looked towards the East—the venerable day-spring of religion—for an authority which all parties might unanimously respect. But now the East itself was in a fever of excitement. And all for what? For a mere question about words, as he understood

*His view of the Question.*

it; or, at most, for mysteries too deep for man to scrutinize, and which, if looked into at all, ought to be kept within the circle of the learned and prudent few.

*His Letter on the subject.*

Such was the feeling of Constantine, and such the tenor of his letter to Arius and Alexander.[10] For in an appeal full of earnestness, and showing every mark of good sense except pertinence to the cause at issue, he condescended to write to the two himself; putting the blame of the quarrel with equal hand on both; complaining that they had robbed him of his sleep and of all joy in life; and urging them for the Church's sake, for the furtherance of unity, for the tranquillity of the empire, and finally, out of respect to his own peace of mind, to put an end to the scandal, to compromise the difference, imitating therein the example of the heathen philosophic schools; and, in short, if all could not see alike, yet to preserve at least decorum, with the continuance of kindly feeling and mutual respect.

*He sends a Mediator,*

With his letter he sent a special mediator; in the selection of whom he showed a thoughtful impartiality, passing over Eusebius and other eminent Eastern prelates in favor of a Western man, a Spaniard, to whom the subtleties of the Greek tongue and of Greek controversy were almost as unfamiliar as to the emperor himself.

*Hosius of Cordova.*

It was Hosius of Cordova, a favorite of Constantine from the time of his conversion; a "sober-minded" man, "widely known" as such even among those who differed from him in opinion.[11] His dignity of character was adorned by great wealth, his wealth was ennobled by boundless liberality. A confessor in the great persecution, he had taken part in numerous councils since the beginning of the century, and was destined during his long life to have a foremost place in many others. He was famous, in short, as Hosius the Great: a title which he held till the hundredth year of his life, and which, though dimmed by his yielding at last to Arian persecutions, is still accorded to him for his eminent services to the cause of Truth.

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[10] This letter was manifestly written under Arian inspiration. Socrat. i. 7, Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* ii. 63–73.

[11] Eusebius and Athanasius alike sound the praises of Hosius: of all the prelates at Nicæa he is the only one that Eusebius mentions with commendation; of the 400 whom Athanasius counted among his allies Hosius the Great is the only one named. Euseb. *Vit. Const.* ii. 63; iii. 7. S. Athan. *Apolog. de Fuga*, p. 703; *ad Solitar.* pp. 827, 837, 842, etc.

*Result of his mission.*

The result of his mission to Alexandria[12] proved unfavorable to the Arian cause. The impetuous Colluthus was brought back into the pale of the Church; the Emperor, learning from Hosius the true state of things in Egypt and the character and importance of the question at issue, was committed, for the time being at least, to the orthodox side.

*Arius and the Emperor.*

The cause of Arius was still further damaged, in the imperial mind, by the tumultuous conduct of some of the heretic's followers in Egypt. There was a riot, in which a statue of the Emperor was overthrown. With tidings of this and similar disorders there came also a letter from Arius, in which he was indiscreet enough to boast of the number and power of his adherents in Libya Constantine was exasperated and perhaps alarmed. He refrained, however, from any resort to the weapons of state persecution, but condescended to chastise the audacious "Porphyrian" by an answer to his epistle,[13] more remarkable for its vigor of vituperation than for its dignity of style or sound exposition of the faith.

*A new Ordeal, A.D. 324.*

Thus in less than five years the whole Roman world was on fire with a dispute, in which the battle with heathenism was about to be fought over within the Church itself; and the Truth, which for three centuries had been tried in the furnace of persecution, was to undergo the more searching ordeal of an intellectual scrutiny, the most rigid and most subtle that the rationalistic Greek mind could bring to bear upon it.

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[12] Of what Hosius did in Egypt nothing is known beyond the general result: Baronius, therefore, *makes up* a little history (unsupported by authorities) in which Hosius figures as the Pope's legate, holding a General Council.

[13] The letter is given in Gelasius Cyzicenus, iii., whose History of the Nicene Council can be found in Mansi *Concilia*, tom. ii., or in Hardouin, tom. i.

## CHAPTER III.

### GENERAL COUNCIL OF NICÆA.

*Idea of a General Council.*

WHEN Constantine, in his letter to Alexander and Arius, gave utterance to a wish that the Eastern Church should be called in to settle the great quarrel of the West, he had evidently in his mind the germ, at least, of the idea of an Ecumenical Synod. Local differences could best be adjusted by bringing them face to face with the agreement of the Church at large.[1] The Donatist and Meletian schisms, the Easter controversy still unsettled, the Novatian heresy, the Arian strife: all these were questions in which the whole Church was interested. The whole Church, then, should be put in a position to pronounce upon them.

*Synod called.*

Moved by such considerations, and led, in all probability, by the advice of Hosius, the great council-leader of the age, the Emperor took measures, marked by his usual breadth of view, magnificence of plan, and promptness of execution, for the convening of the most remarkable assemblage the world at any time had witnessed.[2]

From the remotest corners of the empire, and even from

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[1] In his letter on the Council (Theod. i. 10), Constantine distinguishes between following *reason* and following private opinion. By the former he means the *common sense* of the Church; by the latter, the judgment of individual minds.

[2] See the Ch. Historians: Eusebius, *De Vit. Constant.;* S. Athanas. *de Decret. Synod. Nic.;* Gelasii Cyzicen. *Syntagma*, etc., contained in Mansi, *Concilia*, tom. ii.; Kaye, *Some Account of the C. of Nic.*, etc.; De Broglie, *L'Eglise et l'Empire R.*, etc., ii. 2, *Eclaircissement B.*

*Nicæa.*

regions that lay beyond the borders of the Roman world, the chief pastors were invited to come together. Public carriages were placed at their disposal; their expenses were to be met at the public charge. The Emperor, with the vast resources of the empire, was pledged to the success of the undertaking. Nicæa, a most ancient and illustrious city, situated on one of the bays of the Propontis, not far from the site which the imperial eye had already singled out as the golden gate of communication between the East and West, was appropriately chosen as the most central and accessible place of meeting.

*The* cccxviii.

The Bishops were not slow in obeying the imperial summons. More than three hundred, known in later times as the mystical Three Hundred and Eighteen,[3] are said to have assembled, each with an attendant crowd of presbyters, deacons, and other followers. The greater part came from the Eastern Church. The West was represented by Vitus and Vincentius, presbyter-legates of the aged Sylvester of Rome; and by Hosius of Cordova, Cæcilianus of Carthage, with others from the chief cities of Italy, Spain, Sicily, and Gaul. Two Barbarians were present, Theophilus, a Goth, and John, a Persian.

*Their character.*

With the exception of quite a small circle of learned prelates, chiefly of the schools of Origen and Lucian, the clergy seem to have been mostly of that simple type which ages of persecution had rendered popular. Scars and mutilations were held in higher honor among them than the skill of the orator or dialectician.

There was Paphnutius, the scarred and halting veteran of

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[3] The count varies from 250 to 350. Of course, in a body more than two months in session, the numbers present might vary from day to day. The number 318 was fixed on from a mystical allusion to the servants who followed Abraham in his pursuit of the robber kings: Hilar. *De Synod.* 86; Letter of Liberius in Socrat. iv. 12. In Greek numerals, 318 is expressed by the letters TIH, which may be interpreted "the Cross of Jesus." Hence the Synod was called by the Greeks, the Council of the TIH.

*Paphnutius.*

the Upper Thebais: the empty socket of whose eye, extinguished in the great persecution, Constantine delighted to kiss. He is still more honorably known as the blameless celibate, who, eschewing marriage himself, defeated an attempt made in the Council to separate the clergy from the society of their wives.[4]

*Spyridion.*

*Stories told of him.*

There was Spyridion of Cyprus, a shepherd of souls, a worker of miracles, a father of a family, and a keeper of sheep: a man of boundless benevolence, moreover, and a hearty though kindly reprover of all forms of hypocrisy and affectation. A drop of his quaint humor fell once upon an eloquent but fastidious bishop, who had thought to improve the style of Scripture by reading "Take up thy *couch*," instead of the homelier phrase, "Take up thy bed." On another occasion, certain robbers attempted his fold by night, but were miraculously entrapped and remained there in durance until the morning. "It is a pity," said the saint, when he discovered them, "that you should watch all night for nothing:" so he gave them a ram from his flock, and let them go. At another time, during a strict fast, when a guest declined to partake of pork on the plea that he was a Christian, Spyridion answered, "For that very reason you are bound to eat what is set before you."

*Anti-encratite spirit.*

Such instances may serve to show that a reputation for saintliness could be acquired in that age, without going into the extremes of the ascetic spirit. But there were many representatives, in the Council, of a sterner side of the religion of the day. James of Nisibis came clothed, like the Baptist, in camel's hair. Potamon, Bishop of Heraclea on the Nile, was revered as a sympathizing eye-witness and an eloquent expositor of the wonderful life of S. Antony.

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[4] This story (resting on the authority of Socrates) is impugned by De Broglie and others, chiefly on the ground of its alleged inconsistency with the Third Canon of Nicæa, wherein all women are forbidden the houses of the clergy, except "a mother, sister, aunt, or such *persons as are beyond suspicion*." But this last exception confirms the story. It looks as if the Council would neither exclude lawful wives, nor yet include them; which is just what Paphnutius seems to have contended for.

*Acesius the Novatian.*

It is related by the historians Socrates and Sozomen, and is not inconsistent with the general character of Constantine's policy, that Acesius, a Novatian Bishop, was also summoned to the Council and assented to its proceedings. He remained stiff in his notions, however, with regard to the exercise of the power of absolution. The Emperor had the patience to argue with his scruples, but was at length forced to dismiss him with the quiet remark, "Take a ladder, Acesius, and climb up to heaven by yourself."

*Alexander.*

*Athanasius.*

*Marcellus.*

*Eusebius of Nicomedia.*

Of the intellectual leaders, Alexander, by his position and learning, and the deacon Athanasius, by his logical ability and tact, were decidedly foremost. The latter especially showed a wonderful combination of talents suited to the times. A faultless ascetic, hardly falling short of the rigor of the anchorites, he was yet thoroughly alive to every movement of the world around him. Keen, subtle, rapid in the action of his mind, he could seize instantaneously the real merits of a question in dispute, and with so firm a grasp that, while he declined no argument and shrunk from no excursion to which he might be challenged by an active and evasive foe, he could never be diverted for a moment from his principal object. He looked at the meaning of an adversary rather than at his words. What was still more rare, he laid little stress upon the technical phrases of theology, was indifferent to theories, and could not be beguiled into the defence of untenable positions. In this respect, Marcellus of Ancyra, his principal ally, and a powerful though eccentric champion, proved sadly deficient. With courage and skill in abundance, he lacked common-sense. On the Arian side, Eusebius of Nicomedia had most of that art which holds to the letter of truth, but denies its spirit. Like Athanasius, he had a keen eye for the pith of a controversy, and could, therefore, afford to make verbal concessions. He felt the importance of the word "consubstantial,'' as applied to the nature of the Son of God; and his sensitiveness in relation to that word led the orthodox to see more clearly where their own strength lay.

*Laymen at Nicæa.*

In addition to the great body of clergy, innumerable laymen were attracted to Nicæa by the double motive of interest in the subject of dispute and a desire to see Constantine, the hero of so many victories, amid scenes in which his extraordinary qualities were likely to shine forth with an added lustre. From similar motives, many eminent heathen were present: rhetoricians, sophists, and philosophers of the various schools. It was sport to these to entrap the Christian leaders into subtle disputations. But the fondness of the clergy for contests of that kind was effectually rebuked by a worthy Confessor, who reminded them that "Christ and His Apostles did not teach us the dialectic art, but singleness of mind preserved by faith with good works.'' It was probably the same sturdy champion who is said, by his plain announcement of the gracious truths of the Gospel, to have vanquished a philosopher, a Goliath of the heathen schools, upon whom other arguments had been tried in vain. "Dismiss thy subtleties—ask not the *why* and the *wherefore*—but answer me simply: dost thou believe?'' The philosopher, moved, as he declared, by an unaccountable impulse, confessed himself a believer.

*Heathen.*

*A philosopher converted.*

*Remark.*

Such stories, of course, coming down to us among the *débris* of Nicene times, are of no great value as matters of fact; but serving, as they do, to show the impression left upon men's minds by the signal event of that period, they cannot be omitted without loss to the cause of truth. They belong to the spirit of history, if not to its letter.

*Order of business.*

No original record remains of the order of business in the Council, or of the particulars of its proceedings. As was natural in such an assemblage, many came there with budgets of private grievances or ambitious projects, which Constantine disposed of in the magnificently summary fashion of Oriental justice. He appointed a day when such matters were to be brought before him in writing.[5] When the set time came, he received the memorials; reminded the parties that as Christians and priests they ought not to make themselves amenable to human tribunals; exhorted them as "gods" to await with patience the righteous judgment of God; and finally, having urged them to dismiss all thoughts alien to the sacred business before them, he committed the documents of mutual crimination to the flames. He added, it is said, a well-meant but dangerous remark, that if he were to catch a Bishop in the act of adultery, he would rather veil the crime than scandalize the Church by an exposure of it. These matters being thus disposed of, another day was set for the formal action of the Bishops on the questions for which they were assembled.

*Grievances disposed of.*

The time intervening was given to conferences of various kinds. Arius was more than once summoned, and stated his opinions. The first hearing showed that from that large body, consisting of the bulk of the clergy who held the Faith as a simple tradition handed down to them from the beginning, the heresiarch could expect no favor.[6] His doctrine was a novelty, and that was enough to condemn it. "We have neither learned it nor taught it," was the general cry. Some even went so far as to stop their ears in holy horror. There were others, however, who "contended that former opinions ought not to be retained without examination." Upon these fell the burden of the debate that followed; which, it would appear, was not merely a discussion in solemn conclave, but a general controversy in public and private throughout the city: the clergy, the laity, and even heathen philosophers, warmly participating in it. There was abundant opportunity thus afforded for honest inquiry: an ample field for the display of dialectic skill.

*Conferences.*

*Arius rejected*

*Discussions and debates.*

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[5] The order of events is discussed by Tillemont, *Council of Nicæa*, note ii. I have followed, in the main, Sozomen.

[6] The writings of S. Athanasius are full of testimonies to this effect: *e. g.*, *Epistol. Nicen. Defens.* 25, 26, chap. vi. of Oxf. trans.

"Many of the Bishops," we are told, "and many of the inferior clergy, attracted the notice of the Emperor and court by these disputations. Athanasius, the Alexandrine deacon, particularly distinguished himself."

Eusebius of Cæsarea[7] claims the honor of having been the first to suggest, with a view to conciliation, that there was a sufficient basis of agreement in the current language of the Creeds. He brought in, therefore, a confession quite orthodox in terms, but, as the Arian faction showed by their "winks and nods," easily capable of perversion to a heretical meaning. As the object of the Council was to determine the *sense* of the Creed, such a confession was deemed insufficient. Constantine—so at least we are informed on the authority of the same Eusebius—proposed to amend it by the insertion of the term *homoousion* or "consubstantial." Also, as the Arians interpreted the word "begotten" to mean the same as "created," the distinction "begotten, *not* made," was introduced. These events occurred, it is probable, at the closing session of the Council, when Constantine was present in person. But it is equally probable that there had been a lively discussion of the term *homoousion* before that time, and that Constantine's suggestion of it was merely a carrying out of what he knew to be the mind of the great majority of the Bishops.

*The term Consubstantial.*

*Begotten, not made.*

However this may have been, the word was not finally adopted without a most rigid and searching scrutiny. It was a phrase *not contained in Scripture;* to which objection it was answered, that the sense, not the letter, of Scripture, was what they were called to determine. *It had been rejected*, or at least not adopted, *by the great Council at Antioch.* To this it was replied, in substance, that the Antiochean fathers had either misapprehended the meaning of the word, being entangled in the sophistry of Paul, or had feared misapprehension on the part of others. Since that period, time, which solves all

*Objections answered.*

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[7] Theod. i. 12.

questions, had made its meaning more clear. Finally, it was objected that the word *countenanced Sabellianism, Tritheism*, or other heresies. "Whatever is of one substance with anything, comes from it either by *emission*, as a branch from the root; or by *efflux*, as a child from its parent; or by *division*, as a bar cut in three pieces." To all which there was the obvious reply that, however true this might be of physical substances, yet the Divine essence being in its very nature simple, indivisible, and incomprehensible, we can only affirm of it that *It is what It is:* the question "*how* or *what* It is" lies beyond the limit of human investigation. The term "one in essence," therefore, merely emphasized a fact: it could not be made to enunciate a theory. It forcibly reaffirmed what had all along been affirmed, that "the Son is *of* the Father"; or, that "*what* the Father is, the same is the Son": but to the philosophic question, "how He is of the Father," whether by "emission, emanation, expansion, or division," it gave no answer whatever. Moreover, there were other expressions in the Creed which would guard it sufficiently against a Sabellian gloss. All this was made so clear by the advocates of the term, that even Eusebius was content, after a while, to forego his opposition.[8]

*Spiritual things spiritually discerned.*

In the debates on this subject, Athanasius took a leading part on the Catholic side; also, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Asclepas of Gaza. Hosius, it is said, drew up the Creed in the form which was finally adopted. Their principal opponents were the two Eusebiuses, with Theognis of Nicæa, and Maris of Chalcedon. About seventeen in all, either from sympathy with Arius, or from a real scruple against the introduction of a term not sanctioned hitherto by common use, clung to the less definite confession advocated by Eusebius. Fifteen of these finally subscribed to the *homoousion*. Secundus and Theonas held out to the last, and, with Arius and two of his friends, Pistus and Euzoius, were sent into exile in Illyria.

*Leading debaters.*

*Secundus and Theonas banished.*

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[8] Socrates, i. 8.

The Paschal question was much more easily settled. Hatred of the Jews and of everything Judaic[9] had become so general, that the Quartodecimans readily consented to clear themselves of the taint of a seeming sympathy with them. Easter, it was agreed, should be everywhere observed on the Sunday after the full moon following the 21st of March; and that there might be no miscalculation, the Bishop of Alexandria was empowered to ascertain the day each year, and to announce it in a Paschal Epistle.

*The Paschal Question.*

*Other errors.*

The error of the Cathari or Novatians was treated mildly: their baptism and their orders were to be esteemed valid, a full renunciation of their heresy restoring them to the privileges of the faithful. To prevent confusion, however, their clergy were to be subject to those of the Church, except in places where they should be in sole possession of the ground. The Meletian Bishops were allowed, in like manner, to continue in the ministry; but Meletius was not to exercise the power of ordination. The Paulianists were to be baptized, when converted to the Church.

*Rights of Metropolitans.*

The schism of Meletius being a revolt from the jurisdiction of the See of Alexandria, it was necessary for the Council to say something on the rights of Metropolitans. The decree on that subject begins with the brief sentence: "Let the ancient customs prevail": to which is added, however, a series of particular applications of the principle, taken down (probably) just as they were uttered, with little effort to frame them into a symmetrical whole.[10] Alexandria,

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[9] This feeling is most bitterly expressed in Constantine's letter. Theod. i. 10.

[10] Thus some one may have proposed, "Let the ancient customs be observed which give the Bishop of Alexandria an authority over Egypt," etc. Then, some one else may have suggested, "*Since a similar custom* prevails also with the Bishop of Rome." Then others may have suggested, in like manner, the custom in Antioch, etc., etc. In other words, the custom of Rome (being beyond all question) was cited as a precedent to confirm the rights of those Churches about which a question had been raised. Interpreted in this way, Can. VI. needs none of the new readings or amendments that scholars from time to time propose.

Rome, Antioch, Cæsarea, and the heads of other provinces, should retain the privileges which custom had established. Jerusalem, out of regard to her pristine glory, was allowed to hold to her traditionary titles, but so as not to interfere with the more recent but more actual authority of the Metropolitan of Cæsarea. In short, the metropolitan principle was sanctioned in the form which usage had established.[11] No Bishop should be ordained without the consent of the Metropolitan, or without the vote of a majority of the Provincial Synod. Three prelates, at least, should assist at ordinations. Translations or removals, on the part of the clergy, were rigorously forbidden. Canons were framed against bodily mutilations, against the *subintroductæ*, against the admission of novices to Holy Orders, against excessive rigor or excessive leniency toward the lapsed, and against usury and the "love of filthy lucre" on the part of the clergy. A check was given to the growing usurpations of deacons. On the Lord's Day all Christians were to pray standing. Synods were to be holden twice a year—one immediately before Lent, "that all jealousies and strifes might be settled," and one in the autumn.

*Other Canons.*

On the day appointed by Constantine for the final session of the Council, being probably the fifth of July, the Bishops all assembled in the great hall of the chief palace of Nicæa; and seated in opposite rows, with a wide open space between, awaited the promised presence of the Emperor. He entered, preceded by a retinue consisting solely of Christian friends and members of his household. Tall of stature, majestic in his person, radiant in purple and gold and precious stones, fully conscious of the dignity of the occasion—as was shown in his downcast eyes, in the blush on his countenance, and in the modesty of his gait—the great prince appeared in the eyes of his reverential subjects, "little less than an Angel of God": an impression enhanced by the proud humility with which he waited for a signal from the

*Closing Session.*

*The Emperor present.*

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[11] *Mos antiquus—antiqui mores—antiqua consuetudo:* which means, simply, *established custom*, not divine or apostolic institution.

Bishops before he seated himself on the "low chair of wrought gold" at the upper end of the hall. A prelate, who stood at the head of the right wing of the assembly,[12] addressed to him a few words of thanks and congratulation. He replied in modest terms, declaring his sense of the momentous interests at stake, and exhorting to unity and peace and mutual forbearance.

*Final Action.*

The order of the day then proceeded, to wit, the final judgment of the Council upon matters previously discussed and virtually settled. The Emperor labored hard with the few who were disposed to dissent from the faith of the majority. Some of these he gained over by argument and persuasion. Others yielded only to the fear of exile. As before intimated, only two had the honesty to adhere to their real convictions. The decrees of the Synod were reduced to writing, and signed by the members severally in order.[13]

*Banquet in the palace.*

Before the prelates separated the Emperor entertained them, and at the same time celebrated his *vicennalia*—the twentieth anniversary of his reign—by a sumptuous banquet.[14] It was a scene "less like reality than a dream," in the eyes of guests unaccustomed to such splendors; not an earthly feast, but "a vision of Christ's kingdom." Eusebius, the historian, had the honor of delivering a grand panegyric on the happy occasion: an effort that must have proved somewhat tedious to the Emperor, if we may judge from the zest with which, in his answer, the latter exhorted the clergy to eschew long discourses. "Few people like them," he urged; "fewer still have a liking for the truth. Men are much sooner won by relieving their necessities or by taking their part; and there are some with whom presents go far, or even little courtesies and kindnesses, towards gaining their good will." In all this—except in the matter of long speeches, towards which Constantine had a decided weakness—the practice of the great prince accorded with his precepts. He loaded the Bishops with presents, and was by no means sparing of kisses and caresses. "I, too, am a Bishop," he declared. "You are Bishops of the inside of the Church, I of the outside." That this view of his position was something more than a jest, he showed clearly enough afterwards, by the vigorous course that he pursued towards dissenters;[15] banishing some, frowning upon others, and writing numerous epistles, in which his cold worldly wisdom was curiously mixed up with theological heat and bitterness.[16] The Council, in fact, had proved a great success, and Constantine was not a little intoxicated with the glory of it.

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[12] Probably Eustathius, Alexander, or Hosius of Cordova. Who *presided* in the Council is uncertain. It would seem, however, that the honor fell sometimes to one and sometimes to another of the principal Bishops: though the presiding officer (in the modern sense) was the Emperor himself. In the later Councils, officers of the Empire (Judices) acted as moderators, without a vote.

[13] As the name of Hosius appears first, it has been claimed that he had that honor as representing the Roman See. Neither Eusebius nor the later historians say anything of the sort; and in all early copies of the list of signers, Hosius appears simply as "Osius Episcop. civitat. Cordub. Provinciæ Hispan.," without any allusion to Rome. But *Vitus* and *Vincentius*, whose names come next, are declared to sign "pro venerabili viro papa . . . Sylvestro," etc, The honor accorded to Hosius is sufficiently accounted for by his great prominence in preceding Councils, his "widespread fame," his favor with Constantine, etc. Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* iii. 7.

[14] Euseb. *Vit. Const.* iii. 15, 16.

*Long Discourses.*

The Bishops, on their part, took care that authentic copies of their proceedings should be sent to Alexandria, and the other principal sees.[17]

Of these the Synodal Epistle, addressed to "the beloved brethren in Egypt," is the only one extant.

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[15] Euseb. *Vit. C.* iii. 17.

[16] See Epistle of Constantine in Theod. i. 10.

[17] The Creed is given in the *Letter* of Eusebius *to the brethren in Cæsarea*, Theod. i. 12; also in an *Epistle* of S. Athanas. *to Jovian*, etc., etc. See Hammond, *Definitions of Faith and Canons of Discipline.* Among the spurious documents there is a correspondence between Hosius and Sylvester, in which the former asks, and the latter graciously accords, the *papal* sanction to the acts of the Council. See Mansi, *Concilia*, tom. ii. pp. 719–722.

## CHAPTER IV.

### CONSTANTINE AND S. HELENA.

FROM the field of his theological triumph the Emperor[1] repaired by slow stages to Rome, with a view to the second celebration of his Vicennalia.

A.D. 326.

But the "place of the old Romans" was not at all congenial to that Oriental pomp, that dazzling and unapproachable self-isolation, which Constantine, in imitation of his predecessor Diocletian, had begun of late years to affect. It was even less favorable to the display of an extraordinary zeal for Christianity. The city still remained republican in temper, and more than half heathen. It clung with passionate pride to the glories of the past: glories to which Constantine, by his neglect of the old seat of empire, and by his manifest partiality for Oriental manners, seemed to be strangely indifferent.

*State of feeling in Rome.*

A cold welcome, therefore, awaited the Master of the World in the great metropolis. The patricians sulked; the people, true children of Remus, were, as usual, insolent and satirical, liking nothing better than the chance of a fling at their superiors. Altogether, his reception was quite a contrast to that which, fourteen years before, had been accorded to the conqueror of Maxentius. But he bore it with a semblance of equanimity. "Strange I did not feel it!" was his quiet remark, when told that one of his statues had been pelted by the mob. He consoled himself, however, with an occasional sarcasm, in his turn, at the mock-military airs of the

*The Emperor's reception.*

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[1] Zosim. *Hist. Nov.* ii.; Ammian. Marcell. xvi.; Aurelius Victor Zonaræ, *Annal.* tom. iii.; Euseb. *De Vit. Constant.*

Roman knights; and in other ways his resentment, though in the main carefully concealed, showed that it only awaited a fit occasion to break forth.

*Domestic Tragedy.*

That occasion came suddenly, darkly, and calamitously, in one of those fearful domestic tragedies which the classic reserve of the old drama submitted to the ears rather than to the eyes of the spectator: which came to the outer world only in dread outcries from within, or in broken whispers and unsatisfying rumors.

*Crispus and Fausta.*

Out of the cloud of mystery in which Constantine took pains to envelop this passage of his life, we may gather, with some approach to certainty,[2] that Fausta, his second wife, had long felt a growing solicitudefor the future of her own children, and a proportionate jealousy of Crispus, the Emperor's son by a former marriage, the idol of the army and people, and until quite recently the idol of his father. Hence whispers, intrigues, and parties in the palace. Helena, the strong-minded mother of the Emperor, was partial to the amiable and gifted Crispus. The brothers of Constantine, sons of Constantius Chlorus by his second marriage, naturally inclined to the views of Fausta, and perhaps stimulated her maternal fears. Rumor insinuated another and darker reason for the imperial stepmother's hatred. It was the old story of Phædra and Hippolytus, of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. The result of it all was that the heroic youth, whose military prowess was enough in itself to make him an object of suspicion, was seized by the order of his jealous father; was banished, after a brief and secret examination, to Pola, a small town on the coast of Istria; and there, it is said, was made away with in secret. A similar fate befel the sole surviving son of Licinius and Constantia, a child about twelve years of age.

*Intrigues and Rumors.*

*Death of Crispus.*

Helena was absent in the East when all this happened. She hastened to the court. But her reproaches and lamentations could not bring the dead to life again; they only added other names to the list of victims. The sword now raged among the Emperor's advisers. The days of Nero seemed to have returned. Fausta disappeared as mysteriously as had her noble stepson, smothered in a hot bath, it was reported, by order of her deeply-offended and inexorable husband.

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[2] De Broglie, *H. de l'Eglise*, etc., skilfully brings together the scattered notices of this transaction.

*Death of Fausta.*

By these fearful tragedies, two great souls—the Emperor and his religious but high-minded mother—were plunged into an abyss of grief, not unmingled with remorse,[3] from which the only practicable escape was in a life of earnest repentance and supernatural devotion, or at least of indefatigable activity in public works.

*The Emperor and his Mother.*

The Emperor found a field for his stimulated energies on the banks of the Propontis, the well-known site of the venerable old town of Byzantium. There, in fruitful imagination, and by an instinct well-nigh prophetic, he had already planted a future metropolis of the world. The gigantic enterprise was now undertaken in earnest. In a few years there arose, as if under the stroke of a magician's wand, a second Rome, more magnificent, if not more solid, than the first: a city sacred to Christianity from its foundation-stone, yet adorned with the rich spoils of heathen culture, and destined to be the home, the repository, the ark, of all that was worth preserving and transmitting from the antique civilization. The sagacity that planned such a work, in such a time and place, is only equalled by the reckless resolution and iron strength of will which carried it on so rapidly to a successful achievement. We may well credit the heathen historian's complaint,[4] that the

*Building of New Rome.*

*Gigantic Effort.*

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[3] The wild stories told by Zosimus and Zonaras—that Constantine resorted to the heathen priesthood for lustrations, etc.—probably belong to this period, and are not altogether improbable, though they are too confused and contradictory to be taken to the letter. Zos. ii.; Zon. iii.

[4] Zosim. lib. ii. So also St. Jerome: Constantinopolis dedicatur penè omnium urbium nuditate. Hieron. *Chron.* p. 181.

empire staggered under the burden, that towns were depopulated, and that curses not a few followed the hot haste of the spendthrift builder of cities.

*Grand Schemes.*

*The Army.*

*Peace Policy.*

But this, after all, was only part of a great system of self-imposed toil. The restless energy of Constantine could be content with nothing less than a total reconstruction of the empire. Hitherto the armies of Rome had been stationed on the frontiers, in forts or in fortified camps—a perpetual menace to the nations that lay beyond. Constantine withdrew the greater part of the force into the towns and cities of the interior.[5] They would thus be more immediately under the control of the government, while they served at the same time to overawe an unruly population, and to strengthen the State from within. The Barbarians, meanwhile, might be subdued by Christianity more effectually than by force of arms. Invasion might be converted into much-needed immigration. Constantine, in fact, had outgrown that classic narrowness of mind which regarded all foreigners as Barbarians and all Barbarians as foes.[6] When he conquered the Goths he placed them at once upon the footing of favored allies. With the Sarmatians, in like manner, he peopled the waste places of Italy, Scythia, and Macedonia. To the inhabitants of the Chersonesus he gave free trade. And it has been well observed, that his negotiations with the King of Persia, in behalf of the Christian subjects of the latter prince, are the earliest example of that enlightened Christian diplomacy by which nations in modern times are bound together.

*Attempts at Reform.*

The same general policy of strengthening the State from within, led to a remodelling of the government on the most extensive scale. Four prefectures were established. New offices were created, with a nice graduation of costly dignities adorned with all the pomp of Oriental titles.

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[5] For this he is much censured by Zosimus and others, but ably defended by De Broglie.

[6] Euseb. *De Vit. Con.* iv. 5–14.

In this there was a show of reform but little of the reality. It was a gilding, not a healing, of what had become an incurable decay. It was a sort of apotheosis of defunct power, a gorgeous exaggeration of the pride of place, which corrupted language and contributed not a little to the corruption of morals and religion. When princes came to be addressed as "all-mighty and all-worshipful," saints could hardly be invoked as less than "all-holy and all-pure." Hence a turgid unreality of language and of thought,[7] which flowed beyond the bounds of political life, and crept into the order, the worship, and even the doctrine of the Church.

*Church and State.*

The Church, in fact, had to take the evil with the good of imperial protection. The clergy were honored and enriched; magnificent edifices were erected; titles, privileges, and exemptions were conferred with a lavish hand. It was a shower of golden sunshine coming from a quarter which had hitherto been black with the storms of persecution. We need not wonder that there were some to whom it seemed the fulfilment of the reign of Christ,[8] and who, with little thought for the future, bartered the freedom of the Church for outward magnificence and gilded chains.

*Faults of Constantine.*

On the whole, while in Constantine's policy we may discover many signs of a wonderful forecast, yet there was also not a little of the precipitancy of a splendid fancy: perhaps the eagerness of a mind ill at ease with itself and happy only in the turmoil of ceaseless occupation. There was prodigality without restraint, luxury without repose: leading to burdens and taxations ruinous to the mass of the people.[9] To make matters worse, the Emperor fell into the common error of pluming himself on qualities which he least possessed: he coveted the fame of a theologian, doted on rhetoric, and burdened his memory with a crude mass of multifarious learning.[10] All this had the effect of surrounding him with flatterers, under the name of divines, while adulation[11] flourished under the venerable garb of religion.

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[7] Saint-worship, image-worship, and the rhetorical extravagances introduced into the liturgies, etc., may be partly accounted for and partly excused by the enormities of civil worship, which date from Diocletian and Constantine. What would seem to us adulation appeared to the Greeks of the empire little more than ordinary respect.

[8] Speaking, *e.g.*, of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Eusebius says: "It may be that this was that second and new Jerusalem," etc. *Vit. Constant.* iii. 33.

*Pilgrimage of S. Helena.*

In the meantime the Emperor's mother, with a spirit more devout than her son's, but not less eager, had sought a balm for her wounds, partly in a progress through the Eastern provinces, and partly in tracing the footprints of Him who bore the world's sorrows, through all the sacred haunts of the Holy Land. Wherever she went, her munificence was crowned by that of her son. Churches were erected, with lavish expenditure, in Bethlehem and on the Mount of Olives. At Mamre, idolatry was swept away, and a house consecrated for Christian worship. Innumerable other shrines, already in existence, were elaborately adorned with princely offerings. Alms for the poor, largesses for the soldiery, redemption-money for captives, deliverance for the oppressed, decrees of amnesty for exiles, grants of privileges or exemptions for straitened communities, made the progress of S. Helena a charitable ovation, and caused her name to be remembered in the East as the synonym of all womanly and queenly virtues.

*Her Good Works.*

*The Holy Sepulchre.*

It had long been the intention of the Emperor, moved as he alleged by a divine suggestion, to take measures for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, the site of which had been preserved by local tradition,[12] though hidden from view and purposely desecrated by a temple of Venus, built upon the spot in the reign of Hadrian.

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[9] He was more generous than just. Euseb. *Vit. C.* iv. 1–4.

[10] See the "Oration to the Assembly of the Saints," in which Eusebius probably had a hand. Ap. *Vit. Con.*

[11] Which, towards the end of his life, Constantine rebuked. Euseb. *Vit. Con.* iv. 48.

[12] Williams's *Holy City*, etc.

How far the pilgrimage of S. Helena was connected with this object the narrative of Eusebius leaves uncertain. It is not improbable that the first steps were taken under her eye. The temple of Venus was demolished. The artificial mound on which it had been built was carefully removed, and the earth carried away to a distance. The "holy cave" appeared, as if by a miracle, "a faithful similitude of His return to life" who saw no corruption. It was added, in later times, that three crosses were found, the middle one distinguished by the well-known title.[13] The news was conveyed in glowing terms to Constantine. Furnished by him with ample means and particular instructions,[14] Macarius, the Bishop of Jerusalem, assisted by the governors of the eastern provinces, hastened to adorn the sacred spot with "a House of Prayer worthy of the worship of God." The temple thus erected as "a Monument of the Saviour's Resurrection,"[15] is amply described by Eusebius. It was not finished, however, till about ten years after its commencement.

*Its recovery.*

Helena, in the meantime, had departed to her rest, in the eightieth year of her age. Originally an inn-keeper's daughter in Drepanum, a town of Bithynia; then wife of Constantius Chlorus, to whom she bore the future head of the empire; then repudiated for the sake of a political marriage: she finally emerged from obscurity with the rising fortunes of her son, by whom, it is said, she was brought to a full knowledge of the Gospel, and to whom she proved a faithful and wise counsellor; the only one, perhaps, of all his friends that served him without guile or fulsome adulation.

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[13] The silence of Eusebius as to the discovery of the Cross is dismissed quite cavalierly by De Broglie as a *bizarrerie.* But the same "bizarrerie" occurs in Constantine's letter to Macarius (*Vit. Con.* iii. 30), and in the account of the Bordeaux pilgrim who visited Jerusalem seven years later.—*Itinerar. Burdigal. Patrol.* viii. 790. The earliest allusions to the discovery are in S. Cyril of Jerus.—*Cateches.* iv. 10; x. 19; xiii. 4; *Epist. ad Constantium* (probably spurious). S. Ambrose (A.D. 395) gives a florid account of the discovery, but mentions no miracle connected with it.—*Orat. in ob. Theod.* Pope Gelasius (A.D. 492) judiciously remarks: "There is a written account of the discovery of the Lord's Cross, and another of the discovery of the head of John Baptist: *novel revelations* which some Catholics read. But when they fall into the hands of Catholics, let the caution of S. Paul be read first: "*Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good.*" See Tillemont, *Art. S. Helène;* and Baronius, *Annal.* iii. p. 292.

[14] Euseb. *Vit. Const.* iii. 30.

[15] It is worthy of notice that when Eusebius wrote, the idea of the *Resurrection* was most prominent in connection with the Holy Sepulchre: afterwards it was the Holy Cross, the *true* Cross, etc., etc.

*Helena dies.* A.D. 328.

Her death was a loss to him in more ways than one. For, after her departure, he fell into evil hands. A new set of advisers got possession of the imperial ear. So that, when we come to the dedication of that "House of Prayer," with which S. Helena's name is connected, we witness the strange spectacle of a throng of Bishops, the glory of the East for dignity and learning, dishonoring the Divinity of Him whose death and resurrection they had professedly assembled to honor. To explain this change we must go back a few years, and take up the history of the Arian faction after the Council of Nicæa.

*Council of Jerusalem,* A.D. 335.

# CHAPTER V.

## THE EUSEBIAN FACTION, AND DEATH OF ARIUS.

EUSEBIUS of Nicomedia, the leader of the Arian party, had signed the Homoousion with great reluctance: it has even been alleged, and the story is at least characteristic of the temper of the man, that in signing, he managed to drop an *iota* into the obnoxious word, and so confessed only a *likeness* instead of *oneness of substance* in the Godhead. Hence the term Homoiousion, afterwards is the symbol of the Semiarians. However this may be, his lack of sincerity in the Faith soon became apparent. It also came to light that he

*Eusebius and Theognis sent into exile.*

had been an active intriguer against Constantine during the contest between the latter and his rival, Licinius. He was therefore sent into exile, with Theognis of Nicæa as partner of his fate.

*Arians recalled,* A.D. 331.

But the Eusebian party was powerful at court, and especially they had a fast friend in Constantia, the widow of Licinius. She helped them in many ways, while living; and when she came to her end,—an event hastened, in all probability, by that outbreak of jealousy which had so cruelly robbed her of her son,—she commended to her brother an Arian priest, who became from that time his bosom friend and counsellor. By this man the Emperor was persuaded of the good intentions of the Arian leaders. Eusebius and Theognis returned to their sees and their plots. Arius had the honor of a message, and, when that failed, of a letter, from the Emperor himself; in compliance with which he came to Constantinople, bringing Euzoius with him. To the somewhat vague question, whether *they held the Faith*, they readily answered in the affirmative. They also drew up a confession in writing, conceived in Scriptural terms, in which the Emperor's theological ear could discern no token of heresy.[1] On the strength of this, Arius was not only received into favor, but was sent to Alexandria with an injunction that he should be restored to the communion of the Church.

*Their confession.*

*Athanasius Bishop.*

He encountered there a man of sterner stuff than the amiable prelate he had known in other days. Alexander had departed in peace soon after the close of the great Council. His parting breath was laden with the name of *Athanasius*. "Thou shalt not escape!" he cried, when the beloved deacon failed to make his appearance; and he laid on him, though absent, the burden of his office. The Church had confirmed the dying prelate's choice. When Arius arrived, therefore, in Alexandria, he found little comfort in store for him there. The primate repelled him; S. Antony came down from the desert to warn the people against him; a threatening letter from the Emperor was respectfully but firmly disregarded:[2] in short, "no communion for the inventor of heresy," "no portion in the Catholic Church for that which lifts up itself against Christ," was the cry that greeted the arch heretic from every side.

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[1] "We believe in one God," etc.; "and in the Lord Jesus Christ His Son, *who was begotten* (or made) *of Him before all ages*, God the Word by whom all things were made," etc. Socrat. i. 26; Sozom. ii. 27.

*Arius repelled.*

The Eusebians[3] found it necessary to pick their way with caution. The Emperor, they knew, was sensitive to attacks on the Creed of Nicæa. But, to balance this, he was at heart indifferent to the truth anxious for peace, and impatient of the "troublers of Israel," whosoever they might be. To make sure of him, therefore, the Eusebians avoided all appearance of zeal for doctrine, and directed their attacks chiefly at men. Eustathius of Antioch was one of their first victims. Charges of immorality were trumped up against him. A synod was quietly got together, consisting entirely of prominent Eusebians. The Bishop was condemned and deposed, chiefly on the evidence of an abandoned woman, and a more pliant instrument was put into his place.[4]

*Eusebian Policy.*

*Eustathius deposed.*

Hence the beginning of a schism in Antioch which lasted some eighty years. For the orthodox in that city adhered to their deposed bishop, and kept together as a party, under the name of Eustathians, not only during the time of the Arian rule, but even after Providence had given them a prelate of irreproachable faith.

*Schism in Antioch.* A.D. 331-411.

The course pursued toward Eustathius was repeated in the case of Asclepas of Gaza, and Eutropius and Lucius of Hadrianople. Maximus of Jerusalem, who succeeded Macarius, by his easy temper played into the hands of the

*Other victims.*

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[2] Both the Emperor and Eusebius of Nic. wrote, and both received spirited answers. St. Athanas. *Apol. con. Arian.* 59; Socrat. i. 27.

[3] This name applies generally to the Court party, consisting of Arians of various grades.

[4] The place was offered to Eusebius of Cæsarea, but he declined. *Vit. Con.* iii. 59-62.

party, and escaped persecution at the cost of subsequent remorse. Marcellus of Ancyra was not so discreet; but the charges against him being chiefly of a doctrinal character, it was necessary for the faction, before making a direct attack, to have their own power established on a firmer basis.

*Charges against Athanasius.*

Athanasius, the meanwhile, was not forgotten. Eusebius of Nicomedia kept up a brisk correspondence with the leaders of the Meletians and other malcontents in Egypt; and by their help, three accusations were framed and submitted to the judgment of Constantine. The Bishop, it was said, had forced the Meletians to pay him a tribute of linen robes; he had assisted a rebel with money; Macarius, a priest, had been sent by him to stop the ministrations of a certain Ischyras, and in the violence of his proceedings, had broken a sacred chalice. The Emperor dismissed the charges with contempt, but they were none the less bruited abroad, and others more heinous were added. The Episcopal "sorcerer," it was urged, had murdered Arsenius, a Meletian bishop, and had cut off his hand to make use of in necromancy. Finally, a charge of fornication was kept in reserve, and an abandoned woman was secured to bear witness to it.

*Council at Cæsarea.*

*Council at Tyre,* A.D. 335.

*Charges disproved.*

Constantine at length consented that a council should be held at Cæsarea, for the trial of these and similar charges. The Council assembled, but Athanasius declined to appear. A second synod was appointed to be holden at Tyre. Athanasius came, compelled so to do by an urgent command of the Emperor; and, in the face of the manifest hostility of the Count Dionysius, who presided over the assembly, managed, on most of the charges, to cover his enemies with confusion. Arsenius was produced with both hands whole. The woman's witness miscarried, the accused having taken the precaution to be personated on the trial by a friend, whom she rashly mistook for the alleged offender. Ischyras, it appeared, was not in Holy Orders, and his church and chalice were as much of a myth as his office. In short, nothing was established except the skill of the "juggler" who could thus turn the tables upon his adversaries; and had not the Council bethought them to send a packed committee to Egypt, who might gather fresh charges and proofs, and examine new witnesses, unembarrassed by his baleful presence, their defeat would have been total, and beyond all hopes of recovery. As it was, they adjourned for the present, and proceeded in a body to Jerusalem, whither they had been summoned by the Emperor, to assist in the dedication of the "Martyry," or Church of the Resurrection.

*Council at Jerusalem,* A.D. 335.

There they consummated the work so infamously begun. The committee sent to Egypt reported adversely to the case of the accused. Calvary became the second time the scene of a wicked condemnation on the one hand, of a good confession on the other. Christ was a second time wounded in the house of His friends. A council, second only to that of Nicæa in the dignity and number of the Bishops present, received Arius into communion, deposed Athanasius, and virtually denied the Nicene faith. Marcellus of Ancyra seems to have been one of the few that resisted. For this he also was deposed, either then or within a year after, on a charge of heresy akin to Sabellianism: a charge, by the way, which was not without foundation, his theory of the *Immanent* as distinguished from the *Forthgoing* Word looking much like a denial of the personal preëxistence of Christ.

*Arius received.*

*Athanasius and Marcellus deposed.*

Athanasius repaired at once to Constantinople; where, the avenues of the court being closed against him, he planted himself in the Emperor's path as he was riding out to his villa, and addressed him in those accents of truth and soberness which Constantine, with all his faults, was willing enough to hear from the mouths of the clergy. His conscience was touched. The Episcopal cabal was summoned from Tyre, whither they had returned after the dedication of the Martyry. Five of their leaders were deputed to answer for the rest, who, finding Constantine averse to the sentence of

*Athanasius before the Emperor.*

deposition, and not at all disposed to see it carried out, alarmed his fears by a new and more ingenious slander. Athanasius had threatened, they said, to cut off the export of corn from Egypt to Constantinople. On such a charge suspicion was equivalent to condemnation. The Emperor gave way. With a moderation, however, that proved highly distasteful to the Eusebians, and showed a lingering sense of justice in the imperial breast, the See of Alexandria was not declared vacant; the primate was simply banished to Treves in Gaul. It may be added that his reception in that capital, on the part of the faithful generally, and more especially at the hands of Constantinus, the Emperor's eldest son, was more like a triumph than the ordinary lot of an exile.

*New accusation.*

*He goes into exile, A.D. 336.*

One thing more was needed to crown the victory of the Eusebian faction. Arius had been already received, but now he must be recognized publicly in Constantinople, in sight of the court and the world. An order to that effect was obtained from the palace, addressed to Alexander, the aged and orthodox pastor of the imperial city. The arch-heretic, moreover, had made the way easy by signing an irreproachable confession of faith; to which, also, the Emperor had sworn him on the fearful adjuration, "If thy faith be upright, so is thine oath; if thy faith be false, may God confound thee!"

*Eusebian triumph.*

The good Bishop put no confidence in such professions. Sorely beset by his sovereign and his brother prelates, hardly knowing what course to take, he repaired to the church, accompanied by one Macarius, a priest, who afterwards related the story to S. Athanasius, and there put up his petition to this effect: "If Arius is to be admitted to-morrow, then take Thy servant out of this world; or else take Arius, lest heresy should seem to be admitted along with him."

*Prayer of Alexander.*

The prayer was answered. On the eve of the Sunday appointed for his reception, Arius was conducted in a sort of triumph through the principal streets of the city. To all who saw him he seemed to be in excellent health and spirits. But when the procession came to a well-known spot,

*Triumph of Arius.*

near the great porphyry pillar, in Constantine square, a sudden indisposition forced him to retire to a house hard by. Shortly after, an outcry came from the house. The crowd rushes in. They are greeted by an awful spectacle. Arius, it appeared, has fallen headlong to the ground; a rupture has taken place with a great flow of blood; and, his bowels gushing out, death seems to have followed almost immediately. The news spread rapidly through the city, and through the world. Some saw in the calamity the finger of God; there were others who regarded it as the effect of sorcery. It was left to modern unbelief to suggest that Arius had been poisoned by some zealous Catholic.[5]

*His sudden death*, A.D. 336.

Whatever may have been the cause of this remarkable event, the effect at that crisis was deep and permanent. Athanasius declares that many were converted by it. It was remembered the next day in a crowded church; the Bishop praising God, and the people responding in a suitable service of thanksgiving. The name of Arius became popularly associated with that of Judas; the place where he perished was long pointed out and avoided as a "field of blood."

*Effect on the People.*

The effect on the Emperor was not so apparent. To the warm appeals of the crowds, who called for the restoration of

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[5] The story is related with conscientious care by S. Athanasius (*Op.* tom. i. p. 670), and by Socrates. Gibbon remarks that "those who press the literal narrative must make their option between *poison* and *miracle*"; which is true enough, if by "miracle" be understood merely a *marked* intervention of that Providence which is present as really, though not so signally, in the fall of sparrows. Milman, in a worse spirit, says of the narrative of S. Athanasius, "His *hollow* charity ill disguises his *secret* triumph"; a cruel insinuation, unwarranted either by the letter or the spirit of the narrative in question. S. Athanasius earnestly deprecates the idea that he should "seem to exult over the man's death, . . . . . *death being common to all men*"; so that Milman's sneer can be justified only on the supposition that the repeated and earnest disclaimer is a deliberate lie. If modern historians, by the way, would only extend to the Fathers a little of that charity which they are so rigorous in exacting of them, the tone of history would be wonderfully improved.

S. Athanasius, he answered with a shade of sarcasm, "It is not for me to undo what so many holy priests have done. A few may have acted from spite and jealousy, but it were hard to bring such a charge against them all." He took care, however, to maintain that balance of wrong which is the tyrant's substitute for right, by banishing John, a Meletian Bishop, who happened just then to be the most odious of the intriguing clergy.

*Effect on the Emperor.*

He soon showed, moreover, that he was weary of the contest, weary of efforts that led to nothing, weary even of life. With that prophetic instinct which was one of his gifts, he felt, though still in good health and unimpaired vigor, that the time had come to set his house in order, and prepare for his last account.[6] He completed the division of the Empire among his sons and nephews. That vision of solidarity in Church and State, for which he had so passionately labored, had become dim and broken, and now vanished altogether from before his eyes. His gaze was fixed, instead, upon an empty tomb, which stood, surrounded by twelve others, in the splendid new church of the Holy Apostles. This he had erected for his own repose. It was now solemnly dedicated, perhaps with more seriousness and less adulation, on the part of the court clergy, than had been customary of late on such occasions. "Happy Prince!" one of them had recently exclaimed, at the dedication of the Martyry; "blessed in this life with the sovereignty of the Roman world, destined to reign with Christ through life everlasting!" But lies had begun to pall upon the imperial palate He rebuked the blasphemy of the reverend eulogist: a token that the faith which had been but as "smoking flax" amid the pride and pomp of his over-busy career, had in it, nevertheless, a spark enkindled from above, which neither the scandals of the Church, nor even

*He prepares for his end.*

*Flattery rebuked.*

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[6] Eusebius, in his life of Constantine, is a eulogist: but there is no reason to believe that he is guilty of any positive false statements. The *suppressio veri* is his principal offence. For this reason I give full credit to his account of the latter end of Constantine's remarkable career.

the adulation of courtly clergy, had been able wholly to extinguish.

In this respect, the end of Constantine was a signal proof of the power and grace of the Gospel. He had hitherto not only avoided baptism, but had not even ventured to become a catechumen. His hardy mind was free enough in dealing with matters of doctrine, but a nameless dread had kept him from profaning the sacraments. He had used religion too much as a power of State, but he had not failed to see in it something more. He now began to fall back upon these deeper views. Nothing was omitted that could give seriousness, earnestness, publicity, and all outward show of humility to his repentance. The world saw in him the spectacle of a strong man becoming "as a little child": a spectacle the more striking from the contrast afforded when the news of an invasion from the side of Persia disturbed for a moment the tranquillity of the scene, and the old soldier, appearing in the field once more, with his accustomed vigor, dissipated by his presence the storm of war.

*Power of the Gospel.*

*The strong man humbled.*

Not long after this, the frame of the Emperor was, for the first time, shaken by a serious illness. He made no further delay in his preparations for death, but received the laying on of hands which admitted him to the grade of catechumens. He was still well enough to repair to church, and to kneel on the bare pavement, as he poured forth his confessions and earnest supplications. These things occurred during the seven weeks of Pentecost. Towards the end of the same period he was baptized,[7] probably by Eusebius of Nicomedia, in the Church of the Holy Martyrs; was arrayed in the white robes of a neophyte, declining to wear the purple any more; piously attended to such testamentary duties as still

*End of Constantine*, A.D. 337.

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[7] The charge of "superstition," etc., so often urged against the early Church, on account of this and other instances of the delay of baptism, would be more pertinent if the phenomenon of late repentance were at all peculiar to the early Church. For I need hardly say, that late repentance is just as "superstitious" as late baptism.

remained: and departed about noon on the closing day of the Feast.[8]

The flattery that attended him through life showed itself genuine by clinging for some time to his senseless remains. *His funeral.* Until his sons could arrive to take charge of the funeral, he lay in state in the central apartment of the palace, and the dukes, and counts, and dignitaries of all ranks, daily did obeisance to the coffined form. Thus "he continued to reign even after death," which was not altogether an empty honor, for ordinarily the decease of a sovereign was the signal for anarchy to awaken, and for chronic revolution to shake the Empire.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONSTANTIUS.—ARIAN SECTS AND SYMBOLS.

FEW things in history are less attractive than the course of a *Religious strife.* religious controversy when it has lost its singleness of aim as a question of truth; when the current of earnest inquiry which at first gave an impetus to it branches into a hundred ever-shifting channels, converting society into a malarious delta, as it were—a monotonous but tortuous waste—of intrigues, plots, persecutions, feuds, and blind and bigoted displays of the waywardness of human passion.

But such was the aspect of the Arian strife as it spread through the world under Constantine's successors. With all *Aspect of the Arian Question.* the bitterness, but little of the dignity, of a religious question, it seemed a mere tangle of ecclesiastical and state intrigues: political passions, which had been driven from the swept and garnished house of an overpowering despotism, having returned under the guise of a zeal for dogma.

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[8] Whitsun-Day

And this, in fact, was the cause of many evils of the times. By a struggle of three hundred years, the Church had asserted a freedom of thought and action unknown elsewhere. Civil liberty was hardly more than dreamed of; philosophic speculation had lost all earnestness; literature and the arts could not employ, they could only dissipate, the mind; the sole breath that breathed upon the stagnant waters was that which filled the sails of the Church—all other winds were bound: so that when good men would look for a field of honorable ambition, or when bad men would use liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, they were both alike compelled to resort to the Church's freedom, and to go about their work under the Church's colors. Hence a necessary confusion of things sacred and profane. Hence a rapid reaction towards essential heathenism. For it is of the essence of heathenism to make religion an instrument of State; to sow diverse seeds in the same field, to weave diverse materials into the web of the same garment. Believers were aware of the danger on this side, and they struggled against it; but they could not escape it altogether. In the new state of things, as in the old, there was a fond persistence in the attempt to gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles. The trees of the wood elected the bramble for their king, and thought to solace themselves beneath its shadow. A half-converted court, "*pansebastos*—all-worshipful," an object of awful reverence to good men; but, like all idols, a mere tool to the wicked and designing, dictated articles of faith to the Christian world; and self-contradictory as the dictates were, the majority of that world seemed ready to receive them.

*The Church the Refuge of Liberty.*

*Necessary Confusion.*

*The Church used by the State.*

Yet it is important to observe, that so far as this end was reached in the confusions of the fourth century, it was under the auspices of heresy, and more particularly of Arianism. The side of truth was the side of opposition to the court. The heretical party was eminently the court party. It so happened, therefore, in the good providence of God, that while persecution is peculiar to no creed or sect, but springs

*The Arian court party.*

from infirmities common to human nature, yet the Church continued in the fourth century, as in the ages just preceding, to be the chosen witness against persecution.[1] She contended for the liberty, or, to speak more correctly, for the *sanctity*, of belief. In her new conflict against heathenism from within, as in her previous warfare against heathenism from without, the sign by which she conquered was that of *a kingdom not of this world:* she vindicated her creed, as she had established her existence, by holding aloof from the blandishments of State favor, and by a spirited testimony against subservience to State power.

*The Church still a witness.*

A period involving such an issue has a permanent interest of its own, notwithstanding the irksomeness (it may be) of some of its details, and the sad comments it suggests upon religion and human nature. To go at length into these details is not within the scope of the present history. The facts that seem most essential for an understanding of the spirit of the period may be in part summed up, and in part narrated, under the following general divisions: I. The Emperors and their policy; II. The court party in the Church, the Arian or Eusebian faction; III. The symbols of this party; IV. Their sects or schools; V. Their persecutions, quarrels, victory, and defeat: through all which there runs, like a golden thread, the life of that noble confessor, Athanasius the Great, the Elijah of the day—the one among seven thousand who, in the midst of a defection which seemed almost universal, bowed not the knee to Baal.

*Subject in five Divisions.*

Of the divisions above mentioned, the first *four* form the subject of the present chapter; the fifth demands more space, and enters more or less into all the remainder of this book.

*Plan of this Chapter.*

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[1] See the noble testimony of S. Athanasius, *Apolog. pro fugâ.* I cannot deny that had circumstances been different the testimony might have been different. As the stars are visible in the daylight only from the bottom of a well or pit, so there are some truths (and among them the wisdom of tolerance) which can only be discerned from the depths of adverse circumstances.

I. Emperors.

*Constantine II.*, 337 340.

*Constans*, 337-350.

Constantine, before his death, had provided for the division of the Empire among his three sons and two of his nephews; in the actual partition, however, the nephews were crushed out by a conspiracy, of obscure origin, among the soldiery. The three brothers, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, redistributed the inheritance among themselves. To Constantine II., the eldest, fell the Gauls and borders of the Rhine, with a certain honorary preëminence which entitled him to reside in Constantinople. But a quarrel with Constans stripped him of his inheritance and life in less than four years, and made the victor sole master of two thirds of the Roman Empire. Ten years later Constans himself was slain by the usurper Magnentius. Both he and his eldest brother had favored the Homoousian cause, though neither of the two was of a character[2] to reflect much credit upon it.

*Constantius*, A.D. 337-361.

Constantius, the second and ablest of the brothers, a man of diminutive frame, but tough, laborious, temperate, chaste, whose vanity led him to imitate his father without a spark of his genius or of his nobler traits,[3] avenged the murder of Constans, overthrew Magnentius, and to the no small grief of the Catholics—for he was decidedly addicted to Arian views—became undisputed sovereign of the East and West. The power thus acquired had been deeply stained, from the outset, with the mark of blood. Directly on the death of his father, the young prince had conceded to the clamors of the soldiery, and perhaps instigated the murder of his two uncles, seven cousins, and sundry other persons connected by marriage or blood with the imperial family. Gallus and Julian, the two youngest children of Julius Constantius, were the only members of the family that escaped. The rest of the reign of Constantius was worthy of such a beginning. It was a period of intrigue and misrule, distinguished by an excess of female influence,[4] and by an unprecedented growth of those parasites that feed on the lazy dignity of Oriental despotism, the eunuchs of the palace. This class of favorites, the types in all ages of insolence, obsequiousness, craft, and cruelty, had been repressed by the vigor of Constantine; but his successor found them indispensable to his comfort, put all things into their hands, and with their chief, the celebrated chamberlain Eusebias, he was wittily declared to possess some credit.

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[2] S. Athanasius speaks well of Constans, but the pagan historians (Zosimus more especially) accuse him of gross sensuality.

[3] For the testimonies of contemporaries (orthodox, Arian, and pagan) to the character of these Emperors, see Tillemont, *Hist. des Empereurs*.

*Eunuchs of the Palace.*

Next to these slaves, the prelates of the Eusebian faction were his principal directors. Having once gained his ear, and that of the eunuchs and court ladies, a matter easily effected by Eusebius of Nicomedia,[5] they resolved themselves into a sort of roving commission for the redress of ecclesiastical abuses; holding synods, framing new creeds and canons, deposing Bishops who withstood them, flocking from place to place—to the no small detriment, it was said, of the postal service[6]—and making the Church a scandal to the heathen world. The Emperor is described as chief busybody of this busy clique; "the Bishop of Bishops," his flatterers profanely, but not inappropriately, called him. His father's weakness for theologic fame was exaggerated in him to a mere insanity. While aiming to make his own views a law to the Church, he shifted uneasily from one position to another; so that his days were taken up, it was said, and his sleep went from him, in the making or unmaking of new modes of faith.

II.
ACTIVITY OF THE EUSEBIANS.

*Weakness of Constantius.*

The ambiguous confession of Arius, upon the strength of which he had been received at Jerusalem, Tyre, and Constantinople, was found, on further trial, to be unsatisfactory. It was not a creed that could fill either the hearts or the mouths of a Christian people. Taking advantage,

III.
ARIAN CREEDS AND COUNCILS.

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[4] Which influence, in the case of the accomplished Empress Eusebia, seems to have mitigated somewhat the Emperor's cruelty. Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* tom. iv. p. 750.

[5] Theod. ii. 3.

[6] *Ammianus Marcellinus*, quoted by Tillemont, Gibbon, Gieseler, etc.

therefore, of a great throng of Bishops assembled at Antioch for the dedication of a sumptuous new building, called the Golden Church,[7] the dominant party in the East put forth another and fuller confession; but this also failing of its purpose, they ventured on another, and then still another, till five creeds, in all, attested the activity of the Synod, and their eagerness to harmonize, if possible, all shades of taste and opinion. Ten years later, many minor synods having met the meanwhile, the same class of prelates came together again in a numerous council at Sirmium. Their immediate object was to condemn Photinus, a disciple of Marcellus of Ancyra, who had developed the heresy attributed to his master, and openly taught that the Son, before the Incarnation, had no personal existence, but was only the Word *immanent* in the bosom of the Father. In condemning him, they framed and set forth two new symbols, the longer of which contains twenty-six anathemas. Eight years later a new set of creeds was issued from Seleucia; and after two years, another from Antioch, of a totally different description. Of the whole number of confessions thus put in circulation from time to time, and constituting what Socrates appropriately calls "the labyrinth" of Arian doctrine, about eighteen can be distinguished at the present day;[8] though there were doubtless many more that have left no record.

*Antioch,*
A.D. 341.
*Dominicum Aureum.*

*Sirmium,*
A.D. 351.

*Seleucia,*
A.D. 359.

*Antioch,*
A.D. 361.

*Dated Creeds.*

Athanasius, with the grim humor that occasionally enlivens the severity of his style, sternly ridicules these *dated* creeds.[9] The heretics, he said, were obliged to affix to their confessions the day and year of their issue, that men might know when their faith began and when it ended. To a modern reader it is equally remarkable that the Eusebians, who were "liberals" in matters of faith, went beyond all others in shutting up to one meaning the text of Scripture, anathematizing all differences of interpretation. Thus, to quote one instance from the longer creed of Sirmium, "Whosoever shall say that *Let us make man* was not said by the Father to the Son, . . . let him be anathema." We may also observe that among the variations of Eusebian creeds there was but one,[10] and that one speedily retracted, which *openly* impugned the Deity of the Son of God. The common aim of all would seem to have been, while surpassing the Nicene formula itself in fervid declarations of the glory of Christ as God, yet to avoid the use of any word which could not be interpreted in another sense. They omitted, of course, the term "consubstantial." Simply defective and evasive, they insinuated heresy, but could hardly be said to confess it.

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[7] This Synod of the Dedication has always been held in high honor by the East, notwithstanding the deficiencies of its creeds.

[8] Tillemont, *Mem. p. servir*, vi. 2, cii.

[9] *Select Treatises* of S. Athanasius, Oxford Lib. of the Fathers, part i. pp. 73–128. See, also, Socrat. ii. 37.

*Their evasive character.*

But in the worst of times there is honest error as well as honest regard for the truth. Eusebian evasions could not be satisfactory to either of these. From the attraction towards the Nicene faith on the one side, and a fierce repulsion on the other, sects and schools arose among the Arians,[11] the principal of which may be described as follows:

ARIAN SECTS.

The Eastern clergy generally were orthodox in spirit, but courtly, prudent, deferential to superiors, anxious for peace at any price, and disposed to regard the Homoousion as a needless bone of contention. They therefore availed themselves readily of the term *Homoiousion;* a word susceptible, it was thought, of an equally orthodox meaning, while it was not so obnoxious to the friends of Arius. In the same way, they abhorred the idea that "once the Son was not," but dreaded the seeming paradox of the phrase "Begotten without beginning." It seemed enough for them to declare that He was "begotten before all time." These became known as the Semiarians—a school which proved but as

*The Semiarians.*

*Their Symbol.*

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[10] This creed, framed at Sirmium (A.D. 357), signed by Hosius, and in A.D. 361 adopted at Antioch, *anathematized* both the *homo* and the *homoiousion.*

[11] Newman's *Arians of the Fourth Century.*

wax in the hands of the Eusebian leaders, but which atoned for the logical deficiencies of their creed by a rhetorical profusion of terms of honor to the Son, surpassing the Catholics themselves in the fervor and brilliancy of their ascriptions. Basil of Ancyra was one of their purest and most learned men. S. Cyril of Jerusalem was a better type of the school: a man too facile and addicted to the Oriental vice of obsequiousness,[12] but eloquent, learned, and favorably known to posterity for his admirable *Discourses to Catechumens*. In the latter part of his life, he quarrelled with Acacius of Cæsarea, the leader of one wing of the Eusebian party, and suffered deposition and other persecutions, which brought him to greater soundness and firmness in the faith. Similar causes had a like good effect on many of the Semiarian leaders.

*Cyril of Jerusalem.*

A more plausible ground was taken by Acacius, the learned disciple and successor of Eusebius of Cæsarea. He thought it best to avoid the term *ousia*, "substance," and was content to say that the Son is *homoion*, "like," or *kata panta homoion*, "altogether like," unto the Father. This being Scriptural in language, it was hard to deem it otherwise than sound in meaning. Cyril of Jerusalem signed it with some reservations,[13] and there were others who thought it quite equivalent to the Nicene symbol. It was intended, however, as a cover for freedom of unbelief; and its supporters, known under the name of Eusebians, Acacians, or Homœans, proved to be the craftiest of all the Arian sects.

*Homœans or Acacians.*

Aetius, a self-made man, clear-sighted, hardy, irreverential, and intellectually honest, rose, by his vigorous logic,[14] to the position of a master in the Eusebian schools, shattered the evasive definitions of more cautious teachers, and took his stand upon simple and original Arianism.

*Anomœans or Aetians.*

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[12] That is, if the Epistle to Constantius be his, of which, however, we may fairly entertain a doubt.

[13] He explained that by "like" he understood "like in essence."

[14] According to Philostorgius, he was an invincible debater. No man of his day could stand before him. iii. 15.

He contended that the Son is *anomoion*, "altogether unlike" the Father. "The Father is irreligious, the Son religious," said Eudoxius, one of his disciples, to the people of Constantinople;[15] "for the Father worships no one, but the Son worships the Father." Aetius was scouted by the court as an "Atheist." His followers were called Anomœans, Aetians, Eudoxians, or sometimes Eunomians; the last name being taken from Eunomius, their most learned and polished leader.

*Eudoxius.*

Such were the parties that successively arose from a common ground of hostility to the Nicene faith, or from jealousy and distrust of S. Athanasius. They existed all along under the general name of Arians, or Eusebians; but towards the end of the reign of Constantius they separated more and more into mutually hostile sects. The Aetians, it is said,[16] were the first that broke off into a close communion.

*Their common ground.*

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONSTANTIUS.—ARIAN PERSECUTIONS.

THE accession of the sons of Constantine led at first to a respite of persecution. Athanasius and other exiled Bishops returned to their sees.

ARIAN PERSECUTIONS, A.D. 338.

But the Council of Antioch, commonly known as that of the Dedication, protested against their return, as a breach of order. A Bishop duly deposed could be restored only by such a body as that which had deposed him. The plea was plausible enough; but it was vitiated by the fact that the Easterns in this case had not only neglected to consult the Westerns[1] in the first instance,

*Council at Antioch and second exile of Athanasius,* A.D. 341.

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[15] Socrat. ii. 43.

[16] Philostorg. iii. 14.

[1] The words of Julius of Rome, misunderstood by Socrates (*Hist.* ii. 17),

but afterwards, when, at their own request, a new and special council was holden in Italy, they had declined appearing at it. It was manifest, therefore, that they were averse to a fair trial of the cases in dispute. They had on their side, however, the authority of Constantius. The persecuted primate was again driven from Alexandria, and at the cost of riots and massacres and sacrilege without end, a certain Gregory was installed in the vacant see.

*Exiles in Rome.*

Rome now became the city of refuge to all who suffered for the Nicene faith.[2] Constans was friendly to them; Pope Julius embraced their cause with ardor. In a few years the city was full of exiles. Marcellus of Ancyra, whose doubtful orthodoxy was upheld by Athanasius—a man ever slow to think evil of a friend; Paul of Constantinople, five times driven from his see; Lucius of Hadrianople, Hellanicus of Tripolis, and innumerable others, Bishops and presbyters of Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine, bore witness in Rome and to the West of the outrages inflicted by episcopal and other tyrants.

*Council of Sardica,* A.D. 347.

Nor were their complaints unheeded in the Western court. Athanasius followed Constans from one capital to another, and seven times at least he pleaded before him the cause of the suffering Churches. His arguments and petitions at length prevailed.[3] Constans, with the consent or acquiescence of Constantius, summoned a great council of the East and West to meet at Sardica, a town that lay convenient to both parties on the eastern border of his dominions. The

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are these: "Are you ignorant of the custom that *we should be written to*, and thereupon should be determined what is right?" So again: "According to ecclesiastical law *we ought all* to be written to," etc. Ap. Athanas. *Apolog.* ii.; see notes of Valesius and Lowth to Socrat. ii. 17. The meaning is, that in matters concerning the whole Church—such as the trial of a chief Bishop—all the Bishops, the Roman included, ought to be heard.

[2] Theod. ii. 4; Sozom. iii. 7–10; Socrat. ii. 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15.

[3] Philostorgius (iii. 13) says that bribery was used: an accusation always resorted to in such cases.

council met, but the Bishops separated. The Westerns assumed, and at length declared, the innocence of Athanasius, Marcellus, and Asclepas of Gaza: the Easterns, deeply aggrieved, and apparently not without reason,[4] retired to Philippopolis,[5] and vehemently protested. Doctrinal differences were aggravated by misunderstandings on both sides. The consequence was a schism between the two great sections; or a series, rather, of mutual anathemas, which put each half of the Church under the spiritual censures of the other half, and introduced the wedge of an ever-increasing separation.

*Schism begun between the East and West.*

But Constans had made up his mind to carry out the decrees of Sardica, and intimated as much to his brother in the East. The latter was alarmed. Quite a panic ensued among the eunuchs, women, and Bishops, who composed his court. It was necessary to propitiate a power they were unable to resist; and Gregory, the intruding Bishop of Alexandria, having opportunely died, the way seemed open to secure the good offices of Athanasius. He was not permitted only, but urged, to return. Three pressing invitations were sent him from the court; and when at length he consented, his journey through Syria and Palestine—to say nothing of his reception in Egypt—was signalized by ovations and unqualified submissions. Constantius dealt with him as with a prince and peer. Condescending to ask the loan of one church in Alexandria for the use of the Arians, he was obliged to put up with a refusal: the Bishop would not grant it, unless a like favor should be accorded to the Catholics at Antioch. On the other hand, it was in vain that Athanasius begged the Emperor to confront him with his accusers. No accusers could be found. "If any such there be," said the

*Athanasius restored, A.D. 349.*

*His Welcome.*

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[4] Sozom. iii. 13. The West was manifestly averse to put Athanasius on *trial:* which did not seem fair, as he had been accused and condemned (however unrighteously) by councils of high character.

[5] Their action, however, is dated from Sardica. See Cave's *Life of S. Athanas.* sect. vii. 6.

Emperor, "I call God to witness that I will not listen to them." Indeed, Ursacius and Valens, who had been hitherto the most bitter of their number, wrote a solemn retractation of all that had been said against the saint, declaring in plain terms that lies and forgeries were at the bottom of it all.

The death of Constans and the establishment of the power of Constantius in the West, shortly revealed the hollowness of these professions. The ruin of the great Primate was again determined on; but the influence he had gained in all quarters, and the hold he had upon the people of Alexandria, inspired a wholesome terror in the councils of Constantius, and made it necessary to proceed with a certain caution. There were outworks to be carried before the citadel could be attempted. Accordingly, the first step of the Emperor, after the death of his brother, was to assure Athanasius of the continuance of his favor.

*Sudden change.*

In other cases, there was no such reason for delay. Photinus, in a council at Sirmium, already mentioned, was tried and deposed: a condemnation particularly valuable to the Eusebians, as the heresy of that Bishop could be made to reflect upon Marcellus, his master; upon Athanasius, the firm friend of the latter; and upon the council of Sardica, which had stood by them both. Another step was gained when Ursacius and Valens were induced to retract their retractation. The old charges being thus revived, a few others were added, and the whole batch was lodged with Liberius, who had succeeded Pope Julius in the See of Rome. In the meantime the work of proscription and persecution was vigorously going on: trials, depositions, tortures, exiles, the madness of the people, the ruthless infatuation of priests and rulers. Constantinople especially was the scene of outrages disgraceful to human nature Paul the Bishop, who had been restored at the same time with Athanasius, had to yield once more to Macedonius, his Arian rival; was inveigled away from the city; and was finally strangled at Cucusus a town of Cappadocia. The capital was in a ferment of rage and grief.

*Persecution renewed,* A.D. 351.

*Paul of Constantinople banished.*

Macedonius could govern only with the sword; and, as usual when spiritual men are intrusted with carnal weapons, he used it awkwardly, and with senseless cruelty.[6] There was a butchery of some three thousand persons. There were tortures unheard of in Decian or Dioclesian times. The breasts of women were burnt with hot eggs or compressed with wooden pincers; children were torn from the arms of their mothers and baptized by force; the Eucharist was crammed down the throats of recusants; churches were destroyed or pillaged; towns were sacked and depopulated; crowds of Novatian peasantry, who made common cause with the Catholics, armed themselves with the weapons of despair and routed the disciplined legions that had been sent against them: in short, the rule of Macedonius became a byword of terror; tyranny and rebellion were mutually enkindled to the point of frenzy; and the most eminent heathen historian of the times was fully warranted in exclaiming, "No beast is so cruel to man as many of the Christians are to one another."

*Cruelties of Macedonius.*

The subjugation of the Western Church was marked by fewer atrocities, but, for the time being, with a greater measure of success. "Condemn Athanasius or give up your sees" was the usual alternative to the Bishops. Among the eminent clergy, Vincentius of Arles succumbed: Paulinus of Treves resisted. But in a numerous council at Milan, holden under the eye of the Emperor and consisting of three hundred prelates, defection proved contagious and was almost universal; only a few, such as Dionysius of Milan, Eusebius of Vercellæ, and Lucifer of Cagliari, embraced the alternative of exile. The cause of these confessors was vigorously taken up by S. Hilary of Poitiers, "the trumpet of the Latins against Arianism." A convert from philosophy, this eminent man had been led into the Church by private and diligent study of the Scriptures; but his fervid genius, compared by the ancients to the swift and turbid course

*Persecution in the West.*

*Councils of Arles and Milan,* A.D. 353-355.

*S. Hilary of Poitiers.*

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[6] Socrat. ii. 37, 38.

of the river Rhone, had (notwithstanding his ignorance of Greek) enriched his mind with "the spoils of the Egyptians," so that he was fitted by education, as well as by nature and grace, for the honorable position of a Gallic Athanasius—an upholder and in due time a restorer of orthodoxy. For the present, however, his eloquent appeals to Constantius served only to win him a place among those whom he so generously defended.

*The Emperor kills by kindness.*

The sad overthrow of so many of the Westerns was of course not effected without threats and violence. It is not to be denied, however, that the weapons most complained of by orthodox writers showed more of the serpent than of the wolf, in the Emperor's proceedings. He sometimes persecuted by declining to persecute. As S. Hilary eloquently complained,[7] he tickled the palates of his victims instead of flaying their backs; he invited them to dinner instead of sending them to jail; he used gold instead of iron, sunshine instead of flames: in short, when he found them all cloaked and muffled up against an expected storm, he uncloaked them by the warmth of his flattery and caresses. The consequence was that many of those who lapsed "had no circumstance to plead in extenuation of their guilt"; they could only bewail the power of "Judas kisses and Judas sops," or of "wolves that enticed them from the fold by coming in sheep's clothing."

*Fall of Liberius of Rome.*

The crowning success of his guile was in the lamentable fall of Liberius of Rome, and Hosius of Cordova. The former, when brought to Milan, resisted all efforts to overthrow him, with sufficient firmness on his own part, and with more than sufficient zeal against the weaker brethren. He was banished to Berœa, a town in Thrace. There two years' experience of the hardships of exile, with the solicitations of friends, the seductions of enemies, and the specious desire of restoring peace at Rome—for the people in that city were in a state of riotous indignation against Felix, the

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[7] Quoted in full by Tillemont, VI. 2, liv.

[8] Sozom. iv. 11, 15; Tillemont, *Arians*, sect. lxix; Newman's *Arians*, etc., chap. iv. sect. iii.

Arian intruder:—all this so shook his resolution that he renounced S. Athanasius, signed the Sirmium confession, wrote abject letters to the Emperor and the Eastern Bishops, and, finally, anathematized all who should refuse to follow his example. His enemies delayed his restoration till he should drink the bitter cup to the dregs. They were also anxious to make terms in behalf of Felix, but this the Romans would not hear of. "One God, one Christ, one Bishop," was their answer to every proposition for a divided see.

*Fall of Hosius.*

The venerable Hosius, now an hundred and one years old, after a noble testimony in a letter to Constantius, which still remains,[9] was at length tortured into signing the most malignant of the Arian Creeds, and into an act of communion with Ursacius and Valens, the most odious of the leaders of the Arian party: the further guilt of condemning S. Athanasius he seems to have steadily declined. His end, however, is involved in a cloud of conflicting rumors.[10]

*Athanasius forsaken.*

Athanasius was thus universally condemned, forsaken, or stripped by violence of his friends and allies.[11] It only remained to get possession of his person. For this the master of the world condescended to use stratagem as well as force, laying his plans with a secrecy and skill that showed his sense of the importance of the object.

*Attempted seizure, A.D. 356.*

On the night of the eighth of February,[12] the year that followed the Council of Milan, the Saint was keeping vigil with a large congregation, in the Church of S. Theonas, when suddenly the Duke Syrianus, at the head of a force of more than five thousand men, penetrated the suburbs of the slumbering city: silently posted a guard at each avenue leading from the church; and, bursting open the doors, hurled a tumultuous mass of soldiery into the body of the sacred building. There was an outcry of shouts and groans, a flight of deadly arrows, with "swords flashing in the lamplight," a swaying to and fro of the excited crowd. The Archbishop sat calmly on his throne in the sanctuary, and bade his deacon read the one hundred and thirty-sixth Psalm. High above the tumult rang the inspiriting strain, *For His mercy endureth forever*, the people the meanwhile saving themselves as they could, and the military thrusting, stabbing, pushing, and trampling down all before them as they pressed in broken ranks towards the Altar. The Bishop refused to leave his place, lest the baffled wrath of the intruders should fall more violently upon the people. "Better risk myself," he declared, "than occasion mischief to them." At length he was swept away, fainting, in a sort of eddy, by the increasing pressure of the crowd; was carried, he knew not whither; and on recovering, found himself in a place of secresy and safety.

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[9] St. Athanas. *Hist. Arian. ad Monach.* xliv.

[10] See Tillemont, tom. vii. part 2.

[11] The events last described partly preceded, partly followed, the attack upon Athanasius.

[12] St. Athanas. *Apolog. pro fugâ.*

*His escape.*

For six years after this he remained concealed from his enemies, with a price set upon his head, sought for everywhere by the Ahab of the day, and followed by a flood of vindictive calumny.[13] But the popular heart was with him in his retirement, and, as is not unusual in such cases, assigned him lurking-places of the most improbable description. Thus, *he lay for years*, it was said, *in a dry cistern;* or, again, *he was hidden and attended by a devout and beautiful young virgin:*[14] stories that have a certain value as showing the confidence men felt in his matchless powers of endurance, or in his childlike purity of soul, but are entitled to little or no credit as matters of fact. It is more certain that he occasionally resorted to Alexandria and other busy haunts;

*His retreats.*

*His activity.*

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[13] By his flight, it was said, he had confessed his guilt: a charge which brought out his *Apolog. pro fugâ.*

[14] This story was related by the virgin, *fifty years after*, to Palladius, Bp. of Helenopolis.—Pallad. *Hist. Lusiac.* 135. It is remarkable, by the way, that S. Athanasius (in his *Apolog. pro fugâ*) mentions a scandal of the same sort against Leontius, an Arian: a thing he would hardly have done had he himself been in the same case.

and more especially, that he was present in disguise at the great Council of Ariminum. His writings during this period show that he was well informed of all that was going forward, and that he was in no danger of being forgotten by friend or foe.

*His abode among the Monks.*

He had a sturdy body-guard, equally vigilant and incorruptible, in the monks of Upper Egypt; and it was doubtless in their congenial society that the greater part of his exile was spent. To these simple men Athanasius was the model of a saint and Bishop. He could not only sympathize with them, but could take more than an equal part in their labors and exercises. He came among them, moreover, at a happy time. Their venerable leader, S. Antony, had just departed to his rest, in the one hundred and fifth year of his life, bequeathing all his property, "a garment and sheepskin, to Bishop Athanasius," and predicting—what shortly came to pass—a period of sacrilege and confusion in the Church of God: he had seen in a vision "a herd of mules kicking at the Table of the Lord,"[15] he had heard a voice crying, "My Altar shall be made an abomination!" With such predictions the saint had gone away from his "children" and had left them orphans. But when, shortly after, there appeared among them the slight form and angel face of their great Alexandrian father, it seemed as if Heaven had recompensed them for all their loss. There were accordingly no bounds to their affectionate devotion. In vain Constantius sent band after band into the desert to seize "the troubler of Israel," to hunt the "partridge upon the mountains." It was easy to break up the nest, but the bird had flown. In vain torture was resorted to: the sufferers were Egyptians as well as monks, and it was impossible to extract a groan from them, much less a word of information. They silently stretched out their necks to the sword, and the soldiers had to search for other victims.

*Death of S. Antony.*

Among such men Athanasius was beyond the reach of the tyrant's power. What is more, he lay beyond the reach of that

[15] Sozom. vi. 5.

bitterness of soul, so often the lot of exiles for opinion's sake, and which so often sours into an habitually querulous and despondent temper. Nothing was more remarkable in this great man than the serenity with which he witnessed, and so far as possible excused, the treachery, the weakness, the timid and time-serving spirit, of the majority of his friends. There have been men in all ages who have stood alone: it was the privilege of S. Athanasius that his solitude was cheered by unfailing sunshine. He lived in a sphere to which doubt, mistrust, and disappointment could win no access.

*Security and Serenity.*

Alexandria, the meanwhile, was, like all the orthodox cities, a prey to popular disorder and fierce misrule.[16] The Catholics tried in vain, by two appeals to the Emperor, to obtain redress for the violence which had deprived them of their Bishop and profaned the sanctuary. The answer was, a decree that their churches should be surrendered to the Arian clergy. A mob of pagans and apostates enforced the demand by a savage onslaught upon the Cæsarean Church, in which people of both sexes were barbarously maltreated, while the sacred edifice was pillaged with every circumstance of sacrilegious riot. This was but the prelude to a reign of terror. Clergy were beaten, banished, robbed; virgins were given up to be teased and scratched and torn by Arian women; citizens who remonstrated were answered with the scourge; some were put to death, some sent to the mines: in the midst of all which George the Cappadocian, a man of literary tastes but ignorant of theology and "savage as a bear or wolf," was consecrated Bishop by an Arian Council at Antioch, and was installed by a band of soldiers in the Evangelic See. Under his auspices some ninety of the Bishops of the province were banished, deprived, or visited with persecution in other forms. The vacant sees were filled, not without a spirited resistance, with simoniacal "forerunners of Antichrist." There was violence, in fact, on both sides. George,

*Misrule in Alexandria.*

*George of Cappadocia,* A.D. 356.

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[16] Sozom. v. 30; Socrat. ii. 28; Athanas. *Apolog. pro Fugâ.*

on one occasion, was nigh being torn in pieces by a Catholic mob.[17] On the other hand, when an attempt was made by the faithful to withdraw from his communion and hold separate services, the Duke Sebastian fell upon them, as they were assembled in a cemetery outside the city, and with fire and sword and scourge endeavored to force them into conformity.

*Reign of Terror.*

Such was the rule of Arianism in Alexandria and other cities: a miserable time, to give an idea of which the copious details furnished by the ancients are unnecessary; for, unhappily, such is human nature and human history, that when we have ascertained a willingness to persecute, on the part of any faction, with full power to do so, the rest may be safely left to the imagination of the reader.

*Arian Quarrels.*

But persecution of the Catholics was hardly enough to satiate the evil spirit of the times. The Arian factions could not refrain from turning their weapons upon one another. That blasphemous creed concocted at Sirmium and afterwards adopted at Antioch, which Hosius had been forced to sign, anathematized the Homoiousians or Semiarians as well as the Catholics. The Semiarians, in turn, held a council at Ancyra, headed by Basil the Bishop of that see; and condemned the grosser errors of the other sects. Hence a better understanding, for a time at least, between the Eastern and Western Bishops. Men like Basil of Ancyra or Cyril of Jerusalem were found to *mean* much the same as Hilary of Poitiers or as S. Athanasius. Even the Emperor, for a moment, was drawn into the reaction. He denounced the "atheist" Aetius, with his followers Eunomius and Eudoxius. He was led almost to the point of calling a Council, truly ecumenical; but just at that point the subtle Acacians crept into his favor; and, instead of one, two Synods were assembled, the one at Ariminum, a place convenient for the West, and the other, a sort of counterpoise, at Seleucia in the East.[18]

*Ancyra, A.D. 358.*

*A General Council called for.*

When these Synods met, Ariminum was quite orthodox, and

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[17] Sozom. iv. 10.

[18] Sozom. iv. 17, 18, 19, 22–24.

*Council of Ariminum.* A.D. 359-360.

its four hundred Bishops pronounced with considerable unanimity in favor of an acknowledgment of the Nicene Creed. With equal unanimity they refused to accept the *Kata panta homoion*, an artful formulary, unobjectionable except for its omissions, which had received the approbation of Constantius, and which, from its exact mention of the consulship and day of its issue, went under the name of the Dated Creed. This much being settled, the Council sent a Commission of ten to Constantius, with a request that their acts might be sanctioned and themselves permitted to return to their sees. The Emperor received them coldly. He had other business on hand. He was about to set out, he said, for a campaign in Persia; and the Council might await his return to Hadrianople.

*Seleucia.*

At Seleucia, the meanwhile, the Semiarian majority had adopted the Creed of Antioch, called that of the Dedication, against the protest of the Acacian party. They also sent deputies to Constantius, to inform him of their decision.

*Homœan Triumph.*

But the Acacians had already got the ear of the fickle court. After sundry negotiations, during which the Bishops were given plainly to understand that their return to their sees depended upon compliance with the Emperor's will, a Homœan Symbol was once more presented to the Ariminian prelates; one or two anathemas were added to give it an *appearance* of condemning Arius; finally, it was subscribed by the Council with seeming demonstrations of joy and of confidence in its orthodoxy. It is possible that a few of the Bishops were really deceived. The rest managed in some measure to deceive themselves.

*General lapse.*

A like course was pursued towards the Semiarians at Seleucia, with the same result. It seemed a universal lapse; which, though almost immediately repented of by the Bishops and repudiated by the people, showed how completely the Church was demoralized, and how little was required (humanly speaking) to make it, like the old heathenism, a mere instrument of state—a mere echo of the voice of arbitrary power.

But the lapse of the Church proved the downfall of the heresy before which it stumbled. S. Athanasius, in his retirement, foresaw this result and predicted a swift retreat, on the part of the great body of moderate men, in the direction of one or other of two positions. The orthodox in heart[19] would find their way clear to a right confession: the real heretics would slide from bad to worse. A few years showed the truth of his prediction. Constantius took the downward course, allowing Eudoxius, a man noted for the coarseness and profanity of his "atheism," to be enthroned in the great see of Constantinople, while Euzoius, the old comrade of Arius, was elevated to the same honor in Antioch. By the latter of these two the Emperor was baptized before his death, and probably died a strict Arian. On the other hand, when the world found itself Arian, it groaned as well as marvelled at the strange result.[20] There was a universal feeling of grief and shame. Liberius of Rome availed himself of the opportunity to redeem his credit. Hilary of Poitiers and not a few others, some known as Confessors of the Faith and some who had ranked hitherto among the time-servers, came out with fervent zeal against all evasions, and labored to restore the Homoousion. In the East, the Semi-arians were spurred to the same course by Acacian persecutions, and by the rapid growth in court-favor of the extreme Aetians.

*Defeat in Victory.*

*Retreat in two directions.*

*Revival of zeal for Orthodoxy.*

Such in a general way was the drift of things, when Constantius, still on the flood-tide of life and fortune, heard of a revolt in the West, in which Julian had been forced to accept the imperial title; felt in that event a premonitory symptom of his own approaching end; was distracted for awhile by conflicting counsels; finally took to his bed in a raging fever; and after a tedious death-struggle left the Empire in the hands of the ablest and most politic of all the opponents of Christianity.

*Death of Constantius.*

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[19] A distinction which Athanasius kept carefully in view; for he knew that no *word* could express the truth with absolute precision, and that men might honestly object to the term Homoousion without denying the doctrine it was meant to convey.

[20] "Ingemuit totus orbis et Arianum se esse miratus est." S. Jerome.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TIMES OF JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

*Passage from Christianity to Philosophy.*

In the course of Church History cases continually occur of the progress from Philosophy to Christian faith. Julian[1] was an instance of a passage in the opposite direction. Rescued at seven years of age from the massacre of the Flavian family; brought up in seclusion under the cold and watchful eye of a jealous tyrant; susceptible in his feelings; proud, vain, enthusiastic, eager for fame; capable of achieving distinction in whatever he undertook, yet condemned to the society of books and dreams; above all, knowing Christianity only as he saw it in the hypocrisies and cabals of a detested court: it is not to be wondered at that he turned from the present to the past; that he exchanged a painful and perplexing reality, such as court Christianity at that time presented, for an ideal, visionary indeed, yet easily associated in his mind with all the glories and amenites of the most brilliant page of the history of human progress.

*Julian's early Training.*

Nor was there much to prevent such a bias, in the kind of care bestowed upon his religious education. The eunuch Mardonius, the first and ablest of his masters, taught him how to walk with downcast eyes, to despise all sports, to read and meditate, to repress with monastic rigor all show of human affections.[2] Such a course of training might make a saint, but it was equally well adapted to mar a Christian. For awhile it seemed to be attended with the former effect. The early youth of Julian was sober, studious, and devout: he was a regular communicant, a candidate for the sacred Ministry, and even a Reader, for awhile, in the Church of Nicomedia.

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[1] Abundant materials for a life of Julian, from Ammianus, Libanius; Eunapius, Julian's Letters, Greg. Nazianzen, Basil, Chrysostom, the Church Historians, etc., are brought together by Tillemont. *Hist. des Emp.* tom. iv.; and in the *Memoires*, etc., tom. vii.

[2] In later life he prided himself on this philosophic calm: "A philosopher," he said, "ought not even to breathe, if he could help it."

*Later Studies.*

But, as time rolled on, his inquisitive genius, with the wretched uncertainty of his life and fortunes, brought him under the spell of the philosophy of the day; and philosophy soon introduced him to its next-door neighbor, theurgy. He became intimate with sophists, astrologers, and professors of divination: especially with one Maximus, an Ephesian,[3] the most learned in signs and portents of all his contemporaries.

*His Abode at Athens.*

*Gregory and Basil*

*Mental Conflict.*

At Athens, the stronghold of intellectual pride, where he studied about the twenty-fourth year of his life, the spell was probably completed. There he enjoyed the "delicious vanity," as one of the Fathers called it, of familiar intercourse with men who reigned as emperors in the realm of thought. There he was initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries. Gregory Nazianzen saw him often in those days; as also Basil, called the Great, upon whom was soon to fall the mantle and the spirit of the great Athanasius. With the latter of these he seems to have been on friendly terms. The former,[4] more sensitive to evil, avoided his society; for he saw in him, he thought, a mind unhinged, an uncertain temper, a soul ill at ease, and at variance with itself. Indeed, if we are to credit the picture drawn by Nazianzen, Julian at this time must not only have reached the turning-point of his fate, but must have passed it with no little suffering to himself: in his disordered gait, his feverish eye, his tongue venomous and sarcastic by fits and starts, his abrupt and imperious yet agitated manner, these were all the outward marks of spiritual anguish—of a desperate and secret intellectual struggle.

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[3] An extant poem of this quack, *De Electionibus*, reveals the auspicious moment for all undertakings: for travelling, marrying, taking medicine, running away from one's master or catching runaways, stealing or recovering stolen goods, etc. Fabric. *Bibliothec. Græc.* lib. v. cap. 25.

[4] S. Greg. Naz. *Orat.* iv. 25.

*Julian's Ideal.*

The contest resulted, not in an apostasy to vulgar paganism, but in the adoption of a visionary scheme in which the Platonic philosophy,[5] the precepts of the Gospel, and the miracle-mongering of theurgic science, were to be engrafted upon the stock of the old mythology; while the whole was to blossom and bear "fruit not its own," by virtue of a mystical interpretation.

*Favors of Fortune.*

Julian is said to have been confirmed in his change by the artful prophecies of Maximus, or of other professors of supernatural lore.[6] There was much in his actual life to make him an easy victim to such pretenders. Gallus, his elder brother, after a short reign as Cæsar in the provinces of the East, had been put to death for his cruelty, vanity, and ambition; and the one life that remained to excite the jealousy of Constantius was well known to hang in an even balance. The magicians promised him safety and empire: the Empress Eusebia secured it for him. By her intercession and by a strange infatuation on the Emperor's part, he was sent to Gaul in the capacity of Cæsar. There, anxious to avoid his brother's fate, he dissembled his religion, refrained from every act that might excite suspicion, and aimed only at a moderate, just, and vigorous discharge of his princely duties. But to hit such a mark was to secure without difficulty a more splendid prize.

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[5] "With Porphyry and Iamblichus it (the Alexandrian school) becomes a sort of Church, and disputes with Christianity the empire of the world. Christianity had ascended the throne in the person of Constantine: Neoplatonism dethrones it and usurps its place in the person of Julian the Apostate. But now mark the difference. In losing Constantine, Christianity lost nothing of its real power. . . . . In losing Julian, Neoplatonism lost its power, political and religious." Lewes, *Biograph. Hist. of Philos.* Epoch ix. chap. ii.

[6] Libanius (*Orat.* v.) says that all the pagans, the diviners especially, were secretly sacrificing in his behalf.

*He becomes sole Emperor.*

The army greeted with acclamations a merit unknown to them of late, and forced upon Julian the title of Augustus. A collision with Constantius would naturally follow. But, by another of those sudden turns, which coming as they did at critical moments of his life seemed to point Julian out as the favorite of the gods, the last obstacle disappeared from the path of the young hero;[7] and the vision of an universal Empire, consolidated, restored, and illustrated with the glories of polytheistic worship, assumed shape and consistency in his fervid imagination, and seemed settling into the proportions of an accomplished fact.

*He devotes himself.*

Accordingly he took possession of Constantinople; where, having purged himself of his baptism by the dread rites of the Taurobolia,[8] and having sacrificed in the great Church to an image of Fortune, he stood before the world, not an Emperor merely, but a sceptred sorcerer: a prince armed with all powers, material and spiritual,[9] and consecrating all to the reform of the Roman State, to the establishment of idolatry, and especially to open warfare against the reign of the detested GALILÆAN.

*Measures of Reform.*

Reform began with the Palace, but was rapidly extended into all departments. The parasites of Constantius were swept away: expenses were curtailed with military rigor; the civil list, that hierarchy of State which Constantine had created or unduly expanded, was reduced to more modest and more serviceable proportions.

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[7] This was predicted by the *haruspices:* Julian also saw it in a dream. Zosim. ii.; Zonar. iii.

[8] A baptism in the blood of bulls.

[9] The eulogists of Julian dwell much on this. Libanius (*Orat.* x.) declares that he had no use for councils of war, or other deliberative assemblies, for his art could show him everything supernaturally. Eunapius (quoted in Milman's notes to Gibbon) speaks of him as one "who with a mind equal to the Divinity . . . . held commerce with immaterial beings while yet in the material body: who condescended to rule because a ruler was necessary to the welfare of mankind."

Such measures might have proved acceptable to the public, had the Emperor been able to fill with credit the vacancies created by his sweeping reforms. But the material could not be found. Idolatry had no gift to profit by adversity: the half century that had elapsed since its first overthrow had raised up to it no heroes, no martyrs, no spirit of self-devotion. The consequence was, that when Julian called for men to coöperate with him in the cause of the fallen gods, the summons was answered only by troops of quacks. The Court[10] became a den of sophists, rhetoricians, astrologers, magicians: and even of these classes the more prudent kept aloof,[11] so little confidence was felt in the projected restoration.

*Character of the Court.*

Better hopes were inspired by his honest and in the main successful efforts to reduce the burden of taxation under which the world groaned; by his zeal for impartial justice; by his righteous severity towards spies and informers; and finally by his promise of universal toleration. For he recalled the numerous exiles of the previous reign and put all Christian sects upon an equal footing. He hoped, in so doing, to see the Church perish by its own dissensions;[12] but, the event proving quite otherwise, it was not long before he began to connive at persecution, and even in some cases to set the example himself.

*Acts of Justice.*

*Pretended Toleration.*

He revoked the honors and immunities of the Christian Clergy,[13] and deprived them of all revenues accruing from the State. The Laity were forbidden to hold office, to practise as advocates or physicians, or to teach in the public schools Their children were excluded from a classical education. Fines were laid on those who refused to sacrifice. The destroyers of idol-temples in the preceding reign were

*Severities.*

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[10] The heathen historian complains of this. Ammian. Marcell. xxii. xxiii.

[11] Among others Chrysanthius, who not only declined to go to Court, but being appointed High Priest of Lydia kept on good terms with the Christians. See Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp. Julien*, art. xiii.

[12] Ammian. xxii. 5.

[13] Sozom. v.; Socrat. iii.; Theod. iii.

*Mark of Arethusa.*

*George the Arian.*

*The Christians of Edessa.*

obliged to make good the damage done, or to suffer the pains of insolvent debtors. A venerable Arian Bishop, Mark of Arethusa, who had saved Julian's life at the time of the massacre of the Flavian family, was one of the victims of this enactment: he was stripped, scourged, anointed with honey, and hung up in the hot sun to be stung by flies. For a similar offence, Cæsarea of Cappadocia was expunged from the list of cities. George, the infamous intruder into the See of Alexandria, was seized and torn in pieces by an infuriated mob. He had merited death by his vile rapacity, but provoked it by insults upon the heathen temples.[14] There were similar acts of violence, and perhaps of retaliation, in the cities of Syria and Palestine: all of which, however, the Emperor excused, dismissing the complaints of the sufferers with the sneer, that patience under injuries was a precept of their religion. "It has always been our wish," he said,[15] "to treat the Galilæans with humanity, and not to force them into any act against their religion. . . . But, to aid them in the practice of their admirable law and to facilitate their entrance into the kingdom of Heaven, we have ordered that their Church be relieved of its property, the money to be distributed among the soldiers, the lands to be attached to the imperial domain: that poverty may teach them a lesson of discretion, and may prevent their losing that heavenly kingdom." Such was his decree against the Arians of Edessa who had ventured to maltreat the Valentinians: and in the same spirit he chastised the Christian sects in general, scourging them as it were with thorns of their own planting, driving them into pits which they had dug for others.

*Athanasius again banished.*

In the case of S. Athanasius, he had no such excuse of "poetic justice," but came out without disguise as a persecutor.[16] The Saint, like others, had returned to his See. The heathen complained: the Catholics, speaking in the name of the city, sent to the Emperor a counter-petition. Julian, in his answer, sneered at their presumption, ridiculed their religion, glorified the heathen gods, and gave orders that "the knave" who tickled their "itching ears," the "meddling mannikin" who gloried in risking his life, the miscreant who had "dared to baptize noble Greek women," should be driven without delay from Alexandria and Egypt.

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[14] Socrat. iii. 2, 3.

[15] Epistol. xliii.

[16] Julian. Epistol. vi. xxvi. li.

*Antioch*, A.D. 362.

This growing inclination towards measures of severity was increased by certain incidents that occurred in Antioch, where the Emperor abode for awhile previous to his departure for the Persian war.

*Grove of Daphne.*

The Grove of Daphne,[17] in the neighborhood of that city, had been famous in pagan times as a Paradise of beauty and a Sodom of iniquity: a place where, surrounded by rooflike shades of primeval cypresses, with hills laurel-crowned and secluded valleys and springs pouring their sparkling treasures into a thousand channels, the worship of Apollo had sanctified the frivolity of a pleasure-loving people, and had spread a mystic veil over scenes of unblushing voluptuousness and audacious crime. On the triumph of the Cross it had been cleansed, in some measure, of its abominations. Gallus, Julian's elder brother, had caused the remains of S. Babylas to be transported thither; and a magnificent Christian church, with a noble cemetery, stood confronting and insulting the more ancient shrine. When Julian came to Antioch[18] and visited the old temple, he was mortified to find it almost forsaken: a starveling priest was sacrificing a goose for lack of a better victim; the famous oracle was dumb, "because of the vicinity of dead men's remains." Such a disgrace could not be tolerated. The Christians were commanded to remove their relics. They obeyed the order and converted it into a triumph. As the body of the Saint was solemnly translated to the city, the ears of the Emperor were saluted with a thundering defiance, the precentor singing first and the multitude responding, "Con-

*Removal of S. Babylas.*

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[17] Sozom. v. 19.

[18] Theod. iii. 10, 11, etc.; Sozom. v. 19, 20.

founded be all they that worship carved images and that delight in vain gods." This could not but be followed by mutual exasperation. The Antiocheans *would* sing—especially the women. The Emperor, in spite of the sober counsels of more experienced advisers, was bent on putting a stop to their untimely mirth. Theodore, a young Christian, was tortured on the rack.[19] He sang more heartily than ever while the torment was going on; for, though "he felt the points of the nails a little, yet a young man stood by him (invisible to others) and wiped the sweat from his face and refreshed him with water." On the other hand, the Daphnian Apollo and his temple were set on fire by lightning, as was commonly reported, or, as the Emperor chose to believe,[20] by a Christian incendiary. Hence a series of atrocious and vindictive measures; in which Julian, losing his temper, awakened the martyr spirit in some and the mocking spirit in others, so that the very heathen soon began to regard him with feelings of aversion.

*Cruel Measures.*

Still, as a general rule, Julian was averse to making martyrs, and preferred that policy of mingled flattery and sarcasm, with occasional flashes of apparent magnanimity, which would lead unstable Christians to fall of themselves. From his early training he was intimately acquainted with the Scriptures, and with all the variations of Christian sects. He availed himself of this knowledge with pungent wit; and many who might have stood under the scourge or rack were easily overthrown by a well-aimed sneer. Largesses and bribes were effectual with others. The old trick was revived, of sprinkling the soldiers' rations with lustral water, or exposing in the shambles meats offered to idols. Thus apostates were numerous in the court and camp. On the other hand, there were some who kept their places in both, by virtue of their blameless and consistent conduct: a tyrant may value

*Milder Persecution.*

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[19] Sozom. v. 20.

[20] Ammian. (xxii. 13) treats this as an unfounded rumor. Even the priests of the temple did not profess to *know* the origin of the fire.

renegades as trophies of his skill, but he cannot trust to them exclusively as servants.

*Idolatry restored.*

His design to restore the splendor of the old idol-worship he seems to have first intimated in a letter to the Athenians, written not long before the death of Constantius. The carrying out of the intention was by no means easy. By a stroke of the pen he could transfer to the pagan priesthood the privileges and immunities of the Christian Clergy. But beyond this point everything was in a tangle of conflicting views. The sacerdotal families were at feud among themselves; nor were they disposed to hearken graciously to the Christian-like homilies, with which their Sovereign Pontiff saw fit to edify them, on the virtues of unity, charity, and mutual forbearance. Still less were they inclined to lead disciplined lives, after the fashion of the hated Galileans,[21] or to set an example of humility and chastity, or to show their faith by deeds of beneficence to the poor. For the Emperor desired the fruits of Christianity, though he abhorred the tree: the priests, it was found, had no taste for either. In the same way, the populace valued paganism as ministering to their vices; but the lewd and bloody sports of the circus were an abomination to the disciple of Plato and Mardonius, and he felt himself bound to set his face against them.[22] In the absence of such treats, people could not but laugh at the strange pomps of the revived sacrifices. Hecatombs of oxen seemed a grand absurdity. The imperial sacrificer was nicknamed the Butcher; the symbol on his coins, *a bull supine upon an altar*, was held to mean "the world turned upside down;" while his long straggling beard, his uncomely visage, his insignificant figure and pretentious airs, all came in for a share of the popular ill-humor. With a pen steeped in gall the Emperor retorted, now upon the haters of beards, now upon the enemies of the immortal gods. The lively Antio-

*The Priests lukewarm.*

*The People Satirical.*

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[21] See Julian's letter to Arsacius the high-priest of Galatia Sozom. v. 16.

[22] Zosimus attributes all the Emperor's troubles in Antioch to the severity of his manners.

cheans were pilloried in a satire entitled *Misopogon*. The hated "Galileans," as he called the Christians, were visited more than once with a similar rebuke. But in contests of this kind victory inclines to numbers rather than to wit; and it must soon have become obvious to the Emperor himself, that whatever might be his success against Christianity, the attempt to replace it by a spiritual paganism could end in nothing else than a mortifying failure.

*Julian's Literary Efforts.*

In fact, heathenism could exist only as a superstition: as a religion it was decayed and full of rents; to touch it was to increase the rents in it; and the rents were made infinitely worse, when patched with the new cloth of an ideal, half Christian, half Platonic, and wholly beyond the reach of popular apprehension.

*Cause of Failure.*

This truth was brought home to the Emperor in a more serious way by the issue of his attempt to restore Judaism. It was not inconsistent with polytheistic notions, that the God of the Hebrews should be worshipped in the land of Judæa;[23] and it was natural that Julian should desire to have his own name connected[24] with so magnificent a fane and so splendid a ceremonial, as the Jews with their great wealth and zeal were capable of erecting. Hatred of the Gospel added force to this desire. To rebuild the Temple was to falsify, it was thought, the predictions of our Saviour. To reëstablish the Law was to sap Christianity at its fountain-head. Accordingly, the Jews were incited to engage in the undertaking. Aid was freely given from the public treasury; skilled workmen were brought together; there were rich offerings in profusion, silver mattocks, silver trowels, gold, purples, and precious stones; delicate women came to work in their silks and jewels; finally, the accomplished Alypius, a bosom friend of the Emperor's and a distinguished officer of the empire, was specially intrusted with the superintendence of the work.

*Attempt to restore Judaism.*

*Zealous Preparations.*

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[23] Julian, *Epistol.* xxv.

[24] Ammian. xxiii. 1.

The defeat that ensued was signal and overwhelming beyond all precedent. Trenches dug by day were filled up by night. When a part of the wall was built, an earthquake overthrew it. A fiery eruption from the vaults of the old Temple scattered death and panic among the workmen and consumed their tools. The air was filled with tempests and meteoric splendors: a great cross was seen enclosed in a circle, and luminous figures of a like character seemed to settle on the persons and garments of the beholders. In short, "though Alypius set himself resolutely to accomplish the work, and was assisted therein by the Governor of the Province, the place soon became inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen, and the obstinacy of the elements compelled him to desist."[25]

*Signal Defeat.*

Had Julian lived longer, the enterprise possibly might have been renewed. But, when the news of this defeat reached him, his evil genius had already incited him to an undertaking that proved in its issue still more disastrous, —the invasion of the Kingdom of Persia.

*Invasion of Persia.*

This powerful monarchy, the inveterate rival and enemy of Rome, had received a severe check in the reign of Diocletian; had been conciliated by treaties honorable to both parties under the politic administration of Constantine; but finally, encouraged by the weakness of Constantius and led on by the valor of Sapor the long-lived king,[26] had inflicted not a few disgraces upon the Roman arms.

*Cause of the War.*

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[25] Ammianus (the heathen historian) bears witness to the *repeated* fiery eruptions, and to the consequent defeat of the earnest efforts of Alypius (xxiii. 1). The other circumstances are mentioned by Christian writers, for an analysis of whose testimony, with a complete answer to the objections of Basnage, see Warburton's *Julian.* This writer shows that an earthquake (with its usual accompaniments) might have produced all the alleged phenomena. Others account for them by the gases and fixed air in the vaults of the old Temple.—See Milman's *Notes to Gibbon.* The two theories, by the way, are as old as Sozomen. *Hist.* v. 22.

[26] This valiant monarch had the singular honor of being crowned before he was born. See Gibbon's *Decline,* etc., chap. xviii.

Julian only added to the number of these reverses. Led on by Fortune, the goddess of his first devotions, and emulating the course of the Macedonian conqueror, he crossed the Tigris, fell by a strange infatuation into a snare prepared by the enemy, and finally, after a brilliant but disastrous victory, perished of a wound received in battle. The Christians pointed the moral of his fate by putting into his mouth the famous phrase, *Galilæe, vicisti!* The heathen historian represents him[27] as indulging, on his death-bed, in a self-complacent harangue upon the innocency of his life, the purity of his government, the splendid close of his career, and the felicity of a soul beloved of the gods and early disencumbered of its mortal body.

*Death of Julian,* A.D. 363.

Among heathen and Christians alike there had been a strong presentiment of his approaching end.[28] Julian had divined it by his theurgic skill; and the Genius of the Empire twice appearing to him, once the night before he received the purple and once upon the eve of his last battle, had on both these occasions assured him of it. Athanasius, in like manner, had said of his career, "It is a little cloud and will soon pass over." A similar story is told of a certain schoolmaster in Antioch. When Libanius, the great Sophist, taunted him with the question, "What is the carpenter's Son doing?" he answered promptly and with composure, "He is getting ready a coffin." So, on the fatal day: two priests were conversing sadly in a boat on the Nile, when of a sudden one of them exclaimed, "Julian has been slain this very hour"; Sabbas, a pious monk in Syria, learned the same on his knees; Didymus, the Alexandrian scholar, saw it in a dream and sent

*Prophecies going before.*

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[27] Gibbon seldom lays himself open to ridicule: yet there is something ludicrous in the gravity with which he expresses his "silent contempt" for the Christian story, while he gives in full the rhetorical harangue recorded by Ammianus. He also commits himself to the wild story that the soldiers elected Jovian because they mistook his name for that of Julian.

[28] Theod. iii. 23, 24; Sozom. vi. 2; Ammian. xxv. 2; Tillemont, *Hist. des Emp.* tom. iv. p. 1015.

word of it to S. Athanasius; an officer of the army had a similar vision: in all which stories, as in the parallel anecdotes from the heathen side, we have signs of the deep and earnest feeling with which Julian's career had been commonly regarded. It was evidently looked upon as a spiritual conflict, a crisis and an issue, a "war in heaven," as it were, in which good angels and bad, the powers of light and of darkness, might be expected to take a more than ordinary part.

*Their Meaning.*

Upon Jovian, a Christian confessor and a rude, blunt soldier, elected by the military on the fatal field, devolved the ungrateful task of extricating the army from impending ruin. The Persians, unwilling to combat with despair, granted him the boon of an ignominious peace.[29] He proceeded immediately to restore Christianity. The Labarum was once more raised in the van of the army.[30] The Clergy recovered their former state. Even the Nicene Creed, so long depressed, was elevated at once to the post of honor; for the Emperor, though by no means an adept in theologic lore, had a gift to discern the merits of S. Athanasius, and to receive from his lips the measure of Imperial faith. Jovian died after a reign of eight months only: but the army again showed its preference for a Christian head, by conferring the purple on Valentinian. He also inclined to the orthodox side. His brother Valens, however, whom he adopted as colleague in the empire and set over the East, was a violent Arian and a bitter persecutor.

*Jovian,* A.D. 363.

*Valentinian, Valens,* A.D. 364.

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[29] He had to part with Nisibis (which James the Bishop had defended with his prayers, Theod. ii. 30) and with five provinces: the Roman *Terminus* began to retire.

[30] Julian had substituted the old standard, S. P. Q. R.

## CHAPTER IX.

### TIMES OF VALENS: SECTS AND SCHISMS.

*Prospect of Peace.*

It has been intimated, in the preceding chapter, that the return of the exiles under Julian was favorable on the whole to the Catholic cause. In face of a common foe there was a disposition, on the part of good men at least, to forget past quarrels, to avoid new grounds of difference, and to close up if possible the Church's broken ranks.

*African Church.*

*Donatists subdued, A.D. 349.*

The chief exception to this rule was among the Christians of North Africa. The Donatists in that region[1] were a sect that lived on turbulence: to persecute or be persecuted was a necessity of their existence. The Emperor Constans had tried to win them to unity by sending two commissioners or peace-makers,[2] armed with liberal donations to the suffering poor; but the leaders of the faction, regarding his benevolence as a bribe, roused their rustic militia, the Circumcellions to such a pitch of frenzy, that with their war-cry, *Deo laudes*, and with their war-clubs, called *Israels*, they began a ruthless massacre of the upper classes of society, and it required no little effort on the part of the Roman power to repress them. Repressed they were, however, after multitudes had been slaughtered or had slain themselves.[3] With the method of peace-making adopted in this instance "the Church had nothing to do, either in wish, word or deed":[4]

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[1] See Book III. chap. iv. of this History.

[2] Operatores unitatis.

[3] The Circumcellions threw themselves from cliffs, etc., as a kind of martyrdom. S. Optat. *De Schism. Donat.* iii. 4.

[4] Optatus proves that the Donatists *provoked* persecution; that they merely suffered their deserts as *evil-doers;* and that Catholics had no part in

but she was not the less glad to be delivered from a sect which armed debtors against their creditors and slaves against their masters, and made simple folk believe that the Catholics had set up idols upon their Altars.[5] The deliverance, moreover, seemed to be complete. "Schism was at an end, and even the pagans refrained from their sacrilegious rites: the devil moaned in his temples, the Donatists in foreign parts."

*Donatists restored.*

Unity thus obtained could not but prove precarious. The accession of Julian opened the doors of the idol-temples and brought back the Donatists. Hosts of embittered zealots poured in from the remoter districts and swarmed in every town. The Catholics shrank at once into a trembling minority. Robbed of their churches and cemeteries, their altars and altar-plate, their sacred books, veils, palls, nay of their very Christian name—for their baptism was called a nullity and their prayers a profanation: they could hardly extort an *Ave* from their churlish adversaries,[6] but were saluted instead with a sharp "Turn ye, turn ye—Be Christians—Save your souls," or other exhortations to a like startling effect.[7] By such persecution households were divided, and the Church was thrown into a state of miserable depression.

*Their violence.*

*Council at Alexandria,* A.D. 362.

But in other parts of the world the work of reconciliation was at least begun. S. Athanasius, returning to his See upon the death of George, with Eusebius of Vercellæ and other exiles,[8] held a Council at Alexandria; in which it was determined that naught should be required of converts to Church unity, save to confess the Nicene Faith and abjure the Arian and other heresies.

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the severities against them. He challenges them to name one Deacon, Priest or Bishop, who had instigated or sanctioned the use of force (ii. 14). Yet Milman, by a gross *misconception* of Optat. iii. 6, tries to make it appear that the Catholics not only sanctioned, but "proudly vindicated their barbarities." *Hist. of Christ.* B. III. chap. i. towards the end.

[5] Donatist calumnies were almost without number. Optat. *passim.*

[6] Optatus (iv. 5) in the spirit of true charity argues that Donatists and Catholics are *brethren;* and pleads with the former for fraternal kindness.

[7] Optat. iii. 11.

[8] Socrat. iii. 5-7, 9.

Armed with this wise and charitable decree, Eusebius repaired to Antioch, to allay the dissensions which had continued to prevail there ever since the deposition of Eustathius.[9] To do so seemed easy, for Eustathius was dead, and Meletius, the then incumbent, had proved his orthodoxy by a singularly bold and unequivocal confession.[10] But the Eustathians were sour and impracticable; and Lucifer of Cagliari, another returned exile, had made them still worse by ordaining for them a Bishop of the name of Paulinus. Hence a cankerous feud, the irritation of which extended East and West to all parts of the Church.[11] Lucifer was rebuked by Eusebius for his untimely interference. But this only served to increase the difficulty. He proudly held aloof from all efforts at conciliation, and became leader of a small sect known as the Luciferians.

*Schism in Antioch.*

*Meletius and Paulinus.*

*The Luciferians.*

The West was more ripe for the healing ministry of Eusebius. Liberius of Rome concurred in the decrees of Alexandria; and Hilary of Poitiers,[12] with other kindred spirits, set up the light of truth and dispelled the mists of controversy in the Churches of Illyricum, Italy, and Gaul. Those who had swallowed the baits of Constantius at Milan, or had been entangled in his nets at the Council of Ariminum, penitently acknowledged, or plausibly excused, their error; and, in spite of the opposition of a few hot-heads, were readily received into favor. Auxentius of Milan alone held out. But the Emperor Valentinian, a cordial hater of Church quarrels, obtaining from him a confession that looked orthodox, permitted him to remain in possession of his See; and, that he might remain in quiet, ordered Hilary, his chief accuser, to withdraw from the city.

*The West pacified.*

A.D. 364.

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[9] Theod. iii. 4, 5; Sozom. v. 13.

[10] Meletius, though appointed by Arian influence, had in his first sermon confessed the true Faith: for which he was exiled by Constantius, and came back under Julian. Socrat. ii. 44.

[11] Rome and the West took the side of Paulinus: and even S. Athanasius was drawn in the same direction by his sympathy with the Eustathians.

[12] Socrat. iii. 10.

*Movement towards Unity in the East,* A.D. 364.

With its own faith established, the West had soon an opportunity to confirm the faith of a large number of the Eastern brethren. By the leave of Valentinian,[13] certain Semi-arian Bishops of Bithynia and Thrace had met at Lampsacus, condemned the Creed of Ariminum, approved the Formulary of Antioch, and reiterated the Confession of the Homoiousion. Being persecuted for this by the Emperor Valens, they determined to have recourse to the alliance of the West. Three deputies were sent to Valentinian and to Liberius of Rome. It was earnestly declared that in using the word Homoiousion they meant nothing contrary to the Creed of Nicæa. They were perfectly willing, therefore, to abandon the term. Finally, they drew up a formal paper in which all evasions were condemned, and the Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen was declared to be that "which they had held all along, still held, and would ever hold thereafter."[14] A Council in Sicily confirmed their declaration. Another at Tyana pursued the same course. The letter which Liberius had written in answer to the paper of the Eastern Deputies was commended to the faithful everywhere; and an effort was made to assemble another Synod at Tarsus in Cilicia, with a view to the complete and final settlement of all questions in dispute.

*Nicene Creed confessed,* A.D. 365. 367.

*Valens interferes.*

Valens interfered; forbade the proposed Council to assemble; and gave a general order for the banishment of all Bishops who had been restored to their Sees by the edict of Julian. This was the beginning of a persecution in which the pagans also suffered, many of their philosophers being put to death or banished for treasonable divinations.[15]

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[13] In answer to their application the Emperor said, "I am only a simple layman. Let the priests see to Church affairs, and assemble where they please." Sozom. vi. 7.

[14] Sozom. vi. 10–12.

[15] Theodorus, a young Secretary at court, consulted the soothsayers as to the name of the next Emperor. The letters Θ, E, O, Δ, turned up. Hence a great agitation both in the Eastern and Western courts. Immense num-

Athanasius could plead that he was not one of those *restored under Julian:* on the contrary, when he had returned after the death of George, the tyrant had forced "the meddling mannikin," as he called him, to flee in haste from the city. But this availed nothing with Valens. The Saint was obliged to hide himself again. So strong, however, was the terror inspired by his name[16] and so general the conviction of his secret power, that the Arians themselves began to think better of it, and brought the Emperor over to the same opinion. He was soon allowed, therefore, to resume his See, and the persecution turned upon other victims.

*Athanasius retires,* A.D. 370.

The violence of this last effort of Arianism may be estimated by the fact that on one occasion, when eighty priests were deputed to deprecate the Emperor's wrath, they were all ordered into exile, with secret instructions from the court that the vessel which conveyed them should be set on fire. The order was executed, and the priests all perished.[17] Under such a tyrant the Church fell naturally into new distractions, and heresies hitherto latent or harmless were fretted, as it were, into a baleful life. A few of the more prominent of these may here be noticed.

*Cruelty of Valens.*

First: There were some that sprang from an overstrained and feverish orthodoxy. Such was the error of Marcellus and Photinus, who to save the Divinity of the Word sacrificed the truth of His Personality.[18] In somewhat the same spirit, the Luciferians and Eustathians made schism seem right by using it in the service of a righteous cause.

*Heresies from the Orthodox side.*

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bers of philosophers were imprisoned, many were put to death—chiefly on information extorted by the rack. Zosim. iv. 13–15; Ammian. xxviii. 1; xxix. 1–3.

[16] Sozom. vi. 12.

[17] Sozom. vi. 14.

[18] Photinus made "the *immanent* Word" impersonal: but he avoided Patripassianism by distinguishing between the Word and the Son, applying the latter term to the incarnate Christ only. Marcellus towards the end of his life explained his heresy, but not in a satisfactory way. "S. Athanasius neither cleared him, nor harshly condemned him, but smiling seemed to think he had cleared himself." S. Epiphan. *Op.* p. 837, ed. Petav.

Athanasius disapproved these extravagances of his friends and followers; but party ties were too strong, and his heart was too generous and charitable, to allow him to repudiate the author of them. Another warm friend of his, the poet and scholar Apollinaris,[19] thought to make sure of the Divinity of Christ by denying to the nature He assumed a rational soul. The Logos, eternally a Person and eternally imbodied, being eternally indeed the Son of Man in Heaven, assumed the earthly or psychical part of our nature, and so became *visibly* the Son of Man: the heavenly or rational part He had no need to assume. Such were some of the heresies that sprang from an abuse of logic on the orthodox side. The mental bias, of which they are exponents, led in the course of the next century to a very extensive adoption of the Monophysite error.

*Apollinarian Theory.*

Secondly: Of the spawn of Arius, there were many minor sects in addition to the three leading schools described in a previous chapter. Aërius, one of those reformers who attempt to sweep the house without being at the pains to light the candle, denied the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters, the lawfulness of oblations made for the departed, and the religious obligation of Fasts and Feasts. Eunomius, one of the same sort, taught a solifidian doctrine, and introduced the practice of a *single*[20] immersion in Baptism, with a discipline quite novel in other respects. Macedonius denied the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.[21]

*Arian Sects: Aerius.*

*Eunomius.*

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[19] The heresy was condemned in the Council of Alexandria, but without mention of the name of Apollinaris. Athanasius also wrote against the heresy, but with a like reserve. For an account of Apollinaris, see Soz. vi. 25–27.

[20] Sozom. vi. 26. In Bagster's ed. of the *Ch. Historians* the important word *single* is omitted. The common practice in the East was *trine* immersion.

[21] For the different theories of "wise men" on this subject see Greg. Nazianz. *de Spirit. Sanct.* Orat. xxxi.

*Macedonius.*

Such an error would necessarily flow from Arian premises; but, as it seemed to open a new and untrodden path, it rapidly drew off the remnants of the more obstinate Semiarians.

*The Term Hypostasis.*

To errors of this kind may be added the misunderstandings[22] that arose from the use of the word Hypostasis. As there were some who held it to mean *Substance*, and others, *Person*, those who spoke of *one* Hypostasis and those who spoke of *three* might accuse one another respectively of the Tritheist, or the Sabellian, heresy. The Council of Nicæa had avoided the use of the word, and more recently the pacific Synod of Alexandria had endeavored to discourage it. But in spite of all efforts it continued to be used, and helped to irritate the quarrel[23] between the East and West.

*Minor Errors.*

Thirdly: there were heresies that sprang from superstition: others that arose from an enthusiastic protest against offences of the times. The Collyridians, an Arabian sect, worshipped the blessed Virgin[24] with altars, priestesses, processions, and offerings of cakes. The Antidicomarians impugned her virgin purity. The Massalians, averse to priests and sacraments, professed a life of inward and incessant prayer.[25] The Audians, a hard monastic sect, hated Bishops and rich men, and interpreted the Scriptures so grossly as to clothe the Supreme Being in a human form.

*Heresies in the West.*

In the West the Manichæans were still busy; and the Priscillianists, against the earnest protest of S. Martin of Tours,[26] had to be repressed by the secular arm. They gave much trouble in Gaul and Spain. In Rome, Jovinian, a Milanese monk,[27] renounced the austerities of his profession as unprofitable, held "once in grace" to mean "always in grace," declaimed against the prevalent belief with regard to the superiority of the virgin life, and adopted the Stoic tenet that all sins are equal.

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[22] Socrat. iii. 7.

[23] The West spake of *one*, the East of *three:* so in the Church of Antioch, the Meletians held with the East, the Paulinists with the West.

[24] S. Epiphan. *Hæres.* 58, 59, or 78, 79.

[25] The access of the Spirit among them was indicated by *quakings, convulsions*, etc. Theod. iv. 10, 11.

[26] The first infliction of death for heresy—A.D. 384.

*Vagaries without Number.*

In short, private judgment ran riot amid the anarchy of controversy, so that even S. Epiphanius,[28] after cataloguing the *queens* and *concubines* of the distracted realm of heresy, found his patience spent; and was obliged to dismiss a host of the more frivolous extravagances under the general head of *virgins without number*—so countless were the vagaries in which the religious world indulged.

*Trials of the Times.*

Amid such license of opinion, embittered, not repressed, by the strong hand of the civil power, the position of true men was uncomfortable in the extreme. To *think* was to make one's self the butt of calumny or suspicion; and the wolves that muddled the stream were the foremost to abuse the lambs that sought it only to slake their thirst. To be orthodox was to be called Sabellian, Tritheist, Apollinarian, Macedonian.[29] It was a strife in which every man's hand was against his neighbor; in which men "argued with their teeth rather than with their tongues."

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[27] His movement was quite popular in Rome, where there was a strong revulsion of feeling against the austere teachings of S. Jerome. Jovinian was condemned in the year 389.

[28] S. Epiphanius, the great authority on heresies, was a man of the highest repute for holiness and learning—a type of *primitive* piety. Born in the beginning of the fourth century, he lived till near its close. Learning the monastic life in Egypt, he practised it in Palestine where he founded a monastery, and adorned it by the mild dignity of his episcopal rule in Salamis the metropolis of Cyprus. Towards the end of his life he took part in the Origenistic controversy, siding against Origen. In his great work he makes the sixty *queens* (Canticles vi. 8, 9) to have been sixty generations before Christ, the eighty *concubines* eighty chief heresies, the *virgins without number* (by a play upon the word) to be the *juvenile* vagaries so common in his times, and the *one Dove*, of course, the Church and the true Faith.

[29] S. Basil complains much on this score. If he cleared himself on one side he was immediately attacked on the other. S. Basil. Cæs. *Epistol.* 189. So also S. Jerome, *Epistol.* 15; "Confiteor ut volunt, non placet. Subscribo, non credunt," etc.

*Pope Damasus,* A.D. 366.

Even the Latin Church was more or less disturbed, partly by vile struggles for place and power, partly by the impatience of the ultra-orthodox; and the name of Damasus, the able successor of Liberius, was stained by barbarous massacres of the followers of Ursicinus,[30] his competitor for what was already the rich prize of the See of Rome. In the main, however, the West presented a firm front, now attracting, now chilling and repelling, the more fervid East.

*S. Jerome,* A.D. 377.

Among those who were attracted, the name of S. Jerome is conspicuous at this period. Against "the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines"; amid the word-battles of the *Hypostases* or the more serious questions started by Apollinaris; his impatient and intolerant spirit felt the need of a strong voice and strong arm: and such strength he sought in "the uncorrupt see," the stronghold of the faith and of the authority of S. Peter.[31] Accordingly, Damasus was encouraged to take high ground with the East, and increased the difficulties at Antioch by siding against Meletius in favor of Paulinus. Both of these Bishops, however, were in exile at the time. When they returned, on the death of Valens, Meletius proposed that they should occupy together the Episcopal chair,[32] and whichever died first the survivor should be his successor. But Paulinus would not act without consulting Damasus, and the friendly proposition seems to have been rejected.

*Schism in Antioch.* A.D. 378.

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[30] Which of the two was canonically elected is still *sub lite*, though the evidence *extant* favors Damasus. Ammianus attributes the quarrel to the pride and luxury in which the Roman Bishops lived—a luxury, he remarks, *more than imperial.* Ammian. xxvii. To the same effect is the famous speech of Praetextatus (a pagan of high rank) to Pope Damasus: "Make me Bishop of Rome, and I will turn Christian." Tillemont, iii. 2.

[31] S. Hieronym. *Op.* tom. iv. *Epistoll.* 15, 16.

[32] The speech of Meletius on this occasion was worthy of the saintly character universally attributed to him. Theod. v. 3.

It was about four years later that S. Jerome took up his abode in Rome, and devoted himself to labors by which the power of that see was in the end most wonderfully strengthened. A Dalmatian by birth, a Syrian monk by education, he was a powerful promoter of the ascetic and monastic life. Finding ordinary severities to fail in subduing the heat of his nature, he had given much time to the study of Hebrew, and was a Biblical scholar and interpreter of the highest order. His austerity of character caused him to be hated by the heathen of Rome, and not much beloved by the Christians. With the devout and noble women, however, the Paulas, Fabiolas, Marcellas, he was an oracle and almost an idol, teaching them to adorn the pride of virginity with the pride of learning, and encouraging them in severities unsuited to the sex or to the state of public opinion. Paula, a noble widow, and her daughters Eustochium and Blesilla, were among his disciples. Blesilla, brought to the verge of the grave by a fever, adopted a course of fasting which soon put an end to her existence. The Romans regarded this as little better than religious suicide; and, on the death of Damasus, his patron, Jerome was obliged to leave the city.

*S. Jerome in Rome,* A.D. 382-384.

*Ascetic Doctrine.*

*Death of Blesilla.*

The fruits of asceticism which had proved too sour for Roman taste at that time were afterwards matured in the more congenial air of the East: in a different state of things, with the growth of new wants in the Church, and with the development of monasticism in a form more obviously useful, they were found more acceptable to the Western mind, and may be counted among the chief elements of the growth of Latin Christianity.

## CHAPTER X.

### S. BASIL AND S. GREGORY.

AMID the difficulties described in the previous chapter the cause of orthodoxy was sustained in the East, first of all by S. Athanasius, and after him mainly by S. Basil of Cæsarea in Cappadocia; by S. Gregory of Nyssa, his brother; by S. Gregory of Nazianzus, surnamed the Theologian, his bosom friend, and by that true knight-errant of the faith who went about ordaining Bishops wherever he could place them, Eusebius[1] of Samosata. Of these, the two friends Basil and Nazianzen are remarkable examples of the spirit and temper in which the trials of the age were met.

*Champions of the Faith.*

Basil was a man of genius and a scholar, among the foremost of the Fathers in eloquence, learning, and devotion to the cause of Christ.[2] The Emperor Julian, who knew him well at Athens, attempted on his accession to draw him to the Court. But his overtures were rejected; and a sharp correspondence ensuing between the two,[3] the Saint was in some danger of suffering for his temerity. Indeed it was thought the tyrant spared him only as Cyclops spared Ulysses, that the pains of death might be embittered by the torture of a long suspense.

*S Basil and Julian.*

In the meanwhile Cæsarea, where he labored as a Presbyter, a capital of no little importance in Church and State, once the home of Gregory Thaumaturgus, and in course of time the centre of some fifty suffragan sees, had fallen under the particular displeasure of Julian, and was paying the pen-

*Cæsarea Punished.*

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[1] Theod. ii. 32; iv. 14; v. 4.

[2] Sozom. vi. 15–17; Socrat. iv. 26; Theod. iv. 19.

[3] S. Basil. Epistoll. 39–41.

alty of its zeal against idolatry in the forfeiture of its name and place as a city, and in heavy fines imposed upon its principal inhabitants.

*Excitement of an Election.*

*Eusebius Bishop.*

*Two Parties.*

It was in danger of suffering still more from the excitement of an episcopal election. The See being vacant, party spirit ran so high that for awhile no choice could be made.[4] At length Eusebius, a sober layman, but as yet unbaptized, was called to the archiepiscopal chair by an *instinct* of the people; and the Bishops of the Province reluctantly ratified the choice and carried it into effect. Things turned out better than might have been expected. Eusebius proved an earnest and sound-minded pastor. But from some cause or other, perhaps from the inability of a rude hand to handle a tool so finely edged, the Bishop was not on good terms with his able Presbyter: there was a Basil party and a party of Eusebius; and a bad breach would have ensued, had not Basil retired into the wilderness, betaking himself, like Hagar, to the society of good angels and good thoughts.

*Basil's Retreat.*

*Monastic Life.*

He retired to the wilderness, but by no means to a desert. The spirit that led the first monks to choose the most dreary spots, for greater convenience of combating the demons, was now giving way to a more genial and practical turn of mind. Basil's retreat was a charming mountain home, inhabited by one upon whom none of its charms were lost.[5] There, in company with his friend Nazianzen who was persuaded after a while to share his rest, he prayed and mused and studied; making laws at the same time for the communities of monks which soon began to look to him as their ablest leader. His lessons infused a new spirit into the Cenobites. Among other good things, he taught them the spiritual beauty of agriculture:[6] no fruit so bitter that care will not improve it, no soil so sterile that it cannot be reclaimed, no heart so wicked that one need despair of it. With the same instinct for the useful, he made the wilderness to bloom with noble charities. His preaching circuits extended through the whole country round about; and wherever he preached, societies sprang up for benevolence or devotion, hospitals were endowed, while, by the training of skilled choirs, the dull hearts of the Pontic peasantry were made to laugh and sing.

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[4] This disturbance led Nazianzen to wish that the right of election might be taken from the people: such matters, he thought, were managed better in the State than in the Church. *Orat.* xix. *in Fun. Patris.*

[5] S. Basil. *Epistol* xiv. etc.; S. Greg. Nazianz. *Epist.* vii. etc. The enthusiasm of Basil in his descriptions of natural scenery is finely set off by the

*The Wilderness blooms.*

The necessities of the times recalled him to Cæsarea, where he was reconciled to his Bishop and became his successor. This was not effected without opposition: there being a great party against him, and the Saint himself pleading illness, inability, constitutional infirmity, and the like; to all which the staunch old Gregory Nazianzen,[7] the father of Basil's friend, replied that they wanted a Bishop, not a prize-fighter, and that God was able to convert weakness into strength. He was finally elected; and from that day his labors, cares, and trials went on in a line of fearful accumulation.

*Basil made Bishop,* A.D. 370.

He had been almost broken down before he came to the Episcopate, by distresses among the people of Cæsarea: storms, earthquakes, famines, had raged through Cappadocia, and upon Basil had devolved the labor of unlocking the hearts of the rich and filling the mouths of the clamorous poor. This was to plough in hard ground and to sow in stony places: there sprang from it, nevertheless, not im-

*Sufferings in Cæsarea.*

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broad humor of Nazianzen, who—though really much more of a poet—delights to throw cold water on the ardor of his friend.

[6] *In Hexaem.* Hom. v. Basil also recommends carpentry, shoemaking, medicine, etc. *Lib. Regul.* xxxviii. lv.

[7] The elder Gregory, whose praises with those of his devout wife are eloquently given by his son, was originally a member of the Hypsisterian sect—a sort of half Jewish, half heathen, society, "worshippers of the Most High"—and after coming into the Church had to work his way up to the truth through Arianism. *Orat.* xix. *in Fun. Patris.*

mediate relief merely, but hospitals, monastic associations which now began to flourish in the atmosphere of cities, and other like provisions for the sick[8] and needy.

*S. Basil and the Emperor.*

S. Basil was more than once persecuted by the Emperor and his ministers. Especially, on one occasion, when a widow claimed the right of sanctuary in the Church against the tyrannical wooing of Eusebius, an uncle of the Empress, he felt bound to maintain her cause at the peril of his life. But to a man of disciplined courage, and who had moreover a thorn in his side in the shape of "a troublesome liver," trials of this kind were comparatively easy. Nor could he be subdued by the promise of favor at court. When the Emperor, on a visit to Cæsarea, attended Church during the solemn services of the Epiphany, and went up to make his offering in view of a dense congregation, not a hand was stretched out to receive his gift: the master of the world stood before the Altar and the Archbishop an impenitent sinner, and as such had no right to offer. The spirit displayed on this and like occasions was (humanly speaking) the best safeguard against a tyrant such as Valens.

*Trials from the Brethren.*

A severer trial was the factious spirit which reigned in Cæsarea, and the captious, ungenerous, and suspicious temper that controversy had engendered among the Clergy. The Archbishop's mind was fruitful of new plans for aiding or exciting the devotions of the people. He was a patron of monarchism; he was great in special services, in psalmody, in vigils, in the "decencies of the Altar." Hence no little stir among those whose traditions dated back to "the good old times" of Gregory the Wonder-worker, and who conveniently forgot that their Saint had himself been an innovator of the liveliest kind. The Bishops, in like manner, took frequent exceptions to his doctrine. Bred in the school of Origen, familiar with the difficul-

*Murmurs aud False Charges.*

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[8] His compassionate spirit was remarkably shown in his building a hospital for lepers.

ties of thoughtful Semiarians, and anxious to conciliate all honest differences, he was in his theology too lax for some, too strict for others, too broad and philosophic for almost all. Hence attacks so numerous and calumnies so petty and spiteful, that he was tempted to say, with the Psalmist, *All men are liars*, and to doubt whether honesty and charity had not taken their flight from the earth. But in the deep and tranquil soul of the great Athanasius he found a ready and cordial appreciation. When some one wrote to the noble Alexandrian, complaining of Basil's "Macedonian tendencies," he told the doubters to put away their fears and thank God for having given them so "glorious" a Bishop.[9] The Churchmen of the West, on the contrary, were among the chief plagues of his life. They either held aloof in a "supercilious" spirit,[10] or, as in the case of the schism in Antioch, interfered in a mischievous and arbitrary way. It was not in Basil's nature to bear these things with serenity. But bear them he did, however: and though his hair grew gray in the struggle, and his very heart bled, he had the Divine gift of extracting from his own wounds[11] a balm for the wounds of others.

*Pride of the West.*

His friend Nazianzen aided him in his labors, but added to his trials. For it so happened that to secure the services of so able a coadjutor, and perhaps to draw him away from the retirement which he loved, Basil appointed him—a shepherd without sheep—Bishop of a little border town called Sasima: a wretched sort of place,[12] without water, without verdure, full of dust and noise, a roost rather than an

*Gregory Nazianzen.*

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[9] S. Athanas. *ad Pallad.* Op. ii. p. 763.

[10] He bitterly complained of *δυτικῆς ὀφρύος*—the *superciliousness* of the Westerns—"who neither knew the truth nor would bear to learn it." *Epistol.* x. *ad Greg. Theolog.*

[11] His Epistles are admirable specimens of consolatory writings—eloquent and full of heart.

[12] Under a mortified exterior Nazianzen had a strong sense of humor. For which reason, while I give his story as he relates it, I am not disposed to take his complaints to the letter. Like a good-natured traveller, he liked to

abode of a vagabond population of carriers, smugglers and revenue officers. Gregory felt the unkindness of his friend in consigning him to such a den, and there fell a shade of misunderstanding upon one of the noblest and most delightful of Christian friendships. Basil's motive in this has never been satisfactorily explained.[13] It may have been, that knowing his friend's mind to be luminous rather than ministrative, theological rather than episcopal, he thought to give him the dignity of the Bishopric without burdening him with its pomps and cares: a candle, to give light, must be set upon a candlestick, but it is not necessary that the candlestick should be of gold.

*His proper Gift.*

*Gregory retires.*

However this may be, Sasima profited little by the Nazianzen luminary, and the world gained much. Driven from the place by its thriftless population, he retired to Nazianzus, where he assisted his father so long as the latter lived, and after his death continued to discharge the duties of the Episcopate without formally accepting them. Thence, for some reason not known, he withdrew to Seleucia in Isauria, where he lived awhile the life of a solitary, confidently predicting[14] and quietly awaiting the time when heresy should be obliged to creep back into its holes.

*Athanasius dies*, A.D. 373.

In the meantime Athanasius the Great had been summoned to his rest, and the iron rod of Arianism had fallen once more upon the people of Alexandria: a heretic named Lucius[15] renewed the evil times of George; the orthodox Clergy, with Peter, their elected Bishop, were driven into exile.

In the West, Ambrose had been chosen to the great See of

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have his joke about the discomforts of the way, though in reality he cared little for them. His complaints of Basil especially are relieved by gushes of generous praise. See his poem, *De Vita Carmina*, 30.

[13] Sasima was in dispute between Basil and a neighboring Metropolitan: this, however, was no good reason for sending Gregory there.

[14] Epistles to *S. Greg. Nyssen.* xxxv. xxxvi. cxlii.

[15] Theod. iv. 21. 22.

Milan in place of the Arian Auxentius, deceased. He was a layman only, at the time of his election; and, being governor of Liguria, was actually engaged in quelling a riot brought on by the zeal of rival factions, when of a sudden a child's voice was heard crying, "Ambrose Bishop!" The people took up the cry, and the popular magistrate pleaded in vain his moral and spiritual unfitness for the office; even flight could not save him: the only terms he could make were that he should be baptized and ordained by an orthodox prelate. Milan was thus recovered to the Nicene faith, and S. Basil, among others, was profuse of congratulations.

*Ambrose chosen Bishop of Milan,* A.D. 374.

Shortly after this event, Valentinian, whose reign had been a perpetual struggle against the Alemanni and other barbarians of the North, died suddenly in a fit of rage at the ambassadors of the Quadi; and Gratian, with Valentinian II., an infant four years old, became sovereign of the West. Finally, Valens perished in war against the Goths; Gratian, now master of the world, proclaimed toleration to all sects, except the Manichæans, Photinians, and Eunomians; Peter returned to Alexandria, Meletius to Antioch, and other exiles to other places; and towards the end of the same year Basil the Great, having lived to see a gleam of temporal prosperity, was taken to a better and more enduring rest.

*Gratian Emperor,* A.D. 375.

*Valens and Basil die,* A.D. 378.

*Exiles restored.*

The change in the political sky drew Gregory once more from his retirement; and by a strange guidance of Providence, in which the chief human agency was probably the advice of S. Basil and other orthodox Bishops, his steps were directed towards Constantinople, with the view of gathering and rekindling the few sparks of faith which survived in that city among the ashes of worldliness, heresy, and rampant persecution; for things had not altered for the better in the Eastern capital. Macedonius had been deposed, but Eudoxius had succeeded: Eudoxius had died, but Demophilus, at whose instigation eighty ecclesiastics had been

*Gregory in New Rome.*

A.D. 360-370.

put to death by Valens, came into his place. It was the old succession of the palmer-worm, the locust, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar. Churches were robbed, private property confiscated, the very tombs despoiled. The noble Church of S. Sophia had become a citadel of Satan, a camping-ground of demons. The men of the city were but Ahabs, the women were little better than frantic Jezebels.[16]

*The Anastasia.*

*The Revival of Faith and Charity.*

Into such a scene, gilded but not refined by courtly manners, there entered a lone stranger, bent with age and wasted by disease, bald-headed, decrepit, ill-favored, and worse clad, rude[17] in speech, awkward in his address, and as indifferently provided with money as with wings. It was Gregory, just beginning the work of the *Anastasia* :[18] the prophet who was about to call dead Faith from its tomb, and to revive in a luxurious city the works of charity and self-denial. His success in the undertaking was truly wonderful. By prayers and tears ; by untiring labors ; by admirable discourses in which his proper gift appeared, entitling him to the name of the THEOLOGIAN ;[19] not by miracles,[20] and certainly not by flattery—for his tongue fell upon social follies with the emphasis of an iron flail ; more than all, perhaps, by systematized efforts, men and women of all classes helping in the work : he gathered about himself all that was good in Constantinople; and the little Anastasia bloomed, and the spiritual bees swarmed,[21] till there was no place to receive them, around the eloquent and saintly pastor.

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[16] I condense, and *soften*, the description given by Nazianzen. *Orat.* xlviii.

[17] Rude in the sense of rustic or provincial ; for in other respects he was extremely eloquent. His descriptions of himself are collected in Tillemont, ix. 2, xlvi.

[18] The *Resurrection* or *Revival*—the name of the little church where Gregory's flock met.

[19] Gregory the Presbyter, who wrote a life of S. Gregory Nazianzen, notices that to him alone, after S. John, was the name *Theologian* given.

[20] Gregory cultivated eloquence, he declared, because *he had not*, like the Apostles, *the gift of miracles*. The arguments with which Tillemont combats this disclaimer of miraculous powers are not convincing. It is easy to believe, however, that in the excitement of such a Revival there were "dreams, visions," etc., as affirmed by Sozomen, vii. 5.

*Defence of the Spirit.*

He stood, in fact, as the champion of the Divinity of the Holy Spirit:[22] and a sublime consciousness of the power and presence of the Paraclete was the animating principle of all his efforts.

*Theodosius, A.D. 379.*

*Churches restored to the Orthodox.*

In all this he was befriended by the new Emperor Theodosius, to whom Gratian had committed the sovereignty of the East, and who, like his Western colleague, favored the Homoousion. In turn, he befriended the Emperor, and saved him from the guilt of violent persecution. Gregory had been more than once ill-treated by the dominant faction in the city: once he had been stoned, once cast into prison; once he narrowly escaped the knife of an assassin. But he bore no malice. It was his glory to conquer by patience and works of kindness. He was therefore in no haste to avail himself of the help of the secular arm. But Theodosius regarded it as a matter of simple justice that the Catholics should be restored to the churches from which they had been forty years exiled, and should be put in possession of the property of which they had been robbed. This accordingly was done. The Arians went out, and the Catholics came in. Demophilus shook off the dust from his feet against the city[23] and pitched his tent in the suburbs. Gregory reigned supreme in Constantinople. It was a reign, however, in which he could still feel the quaking of the buried giant's limbs;[24] while occasional "rumblings from beneath, with jets of hot smoke and flame," were a wholesome reminder to him of the precariousness of his triumph.

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[21] See his affectionate poetical tribute to the Anastasia. *Insomnium de Anastas. Templo.*

[22] To this he attributes all his success as a preacher. *Carm. de Vit.* 79–92; *Insomn. de An. Temp.*

[23] Sozom. vii. 5.

[24] Gregory carries out the figure of *Enceladus* with humor and vigor *De Vit. Carm.* 102.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THEODOSIUS AND THE SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL.

*Faith of Theodosius.*

THEODOSIUS, a Spaniard by birth, was of an orthodox family, and had been brought up to reverence the Nicene Faith. A vision,[1] it is said, confirmed him in his convictions. On receiving his appointment to the sovereignty of the East, the reward of a great victory over the Goths, in which he had avenged the defeat of Valens, he informed himself of the belief of the majority of his subjects; and finding that Arianism was divided and distracted, having no solid hold upon the mass of people, he determined, if possible, to bring all back to the old way of thinking: so he restored the faithful to their rights in Constantinople, denied the name "Catholic" to all dissenters, and issued a general edict in favor of "the doctrine taught by Damasus of Rome" against Ursicinus, "and by Peter of Alexandria" against the Arian Lucius.

*His Zeal, how confirmed.*

His zeal is said to have been strengthened by an eccentric act of an aged orthodox Bishop. Coming into the Emperor's presence when the prince, his son, was sitting on a throne beside him, the old man reverently saluted the father but treated the son with neglect. He was forthwith driven from the presence-chamber. As he retired, he had time for a vigorous home-thrust at the offended monarch: "Reflect, O Emperor, on the wrath of the Heavenly Father at those who decline to honor *His* Son, who regard Him as of an inferior nature!" The argument answered its purpose. Theodosius became so decided in his faith, that the eloquent Eunomius, the most able of the Arian leaders, could not even obtain the boon of a hearing from him.

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[1] Theod. v. 5, 6; Sozom. vii. 4, 6.

*Council assembled,* A.D. 381.

In order to bring his subjects to a similar firmness in the faith, and with a view to the settlement of certain minor questions, he proceeded to assemble in Constantinople that great Synod of Eastern Bishops which is known in history as the Second Ecumenical Council.[2] Prelates to the number of one hundred and fifty were present, including those of Egypt and Macedonia, who were somewhat late in appearing. There were also thirty followers of Macedonius, who met apart, however, and steadfastly refused to be reconciled.

*Its first Business.*

The first business before the Synod related to the See of Constantinople, which was virtually held by Gregory, but was contested by an Egyptian of the name of Maximus, one of the most remarkable pretenders of the age. His story, vividly related by Nazianzen, may serve as a sample of the scandals[3] to which the Church at that time was exposed.

*Maximus the Cynic.*

*Gregory deceived.*

About a year after Gregory's arrival in the Eastern capital, there had come to him a man wearing the white robe of a Cynic, with the staff usually borne by philosophers of that order, and an enormous head of hair naturally black, but dyed a brilliant golden red.[4] It was Maximus the Egyptian, a Christian philosopher, a staunch Confessor, an imperturbable man of a certain "whale-like" gravity[5] of face and manner. Gregory, like others, became a willing dupe to such pretensions. It was "a great fish" come to his net; and if the aspect of the man was somewhat unchristian-like, the Saint was so accustomed to look for wolves in sheep's clothing, that when one came before him in its proper skin[6] it threw him off his guard. The end of it was that Maximus seemed devoted to Nazianzen, and Nazianzen to him; the Cynic feigned to be enraptured with the beauty of the Saint's discourses, the Saint lauded the Cynic publicly in Church as a man of extraordinary merit: the two were inseparable—one house, one table, one line of meditation and study, one sacred purpose in life. Such was the state of things in Constantinople.

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[2] Sozom. vii. 7–11; Socrat. v. 5–9; Theod. v. 8, 9; S. Greg. Theolog. *Carm. de Vit.*, etc.

[3] Gregory says, there was never a better subject for comedy. *Carm.* 61.

[4] S. Greg. *Carm. de Vit.* 50.

[5] ἄφωνον πῆμα κητῶδες τέρας.

*Plot of Maximus.*

In the meantime a most ingenious train had been laid among the Clergy of the rival city of Alexandria. By the arts of Maximus and (as Gregory insinuates) not without the use of gold, Peter, the Bishop of that See, had been persuaded that New Rome was much in need of a spiritual head; that Gregory was hardly the man for the place, being rustic in his manners, infirm, impracticable, eccentric,[7] and liable to exception moreover on canonical grounds;[8] that there was a certain Christian Sage on the spot whose praise was in the Churches, having been trumpeted by no less a person than the saintly Gregory himself; that, in short, it would be an excellent thing, and might prevent confusion, if an able prelate could be quietly installed in so important a See before the people should have time to make a noise about it.

*The Cynic enthroned.*

Peter readily lent himself to these or such-like views. The canonical number of Bishops was secretly sent from Alexandria to Constantinople; a congregation, consisting chiefly of Egyptian mariners, stealthily assembled in the principal Church by night; and everything was in readiness to set Maximus, hair and all,[9] upon the archiepiscopal throne. The thing leaked out, and the city was instantaneously in the wildest uproar. High and low, magistrates, people, strangers, even heretics rushed to the rescue: the officiating prelates were obliged to break off the rite, and the plot of Maximus seemed for the time defeated. It was renewed, however, in the house of a flute-player. In spite of all opposition the philosopher was ordained and carried through some form of inthronization: a sacrifice being made to public opinion in this respect only, that he was obliged to submit to the inexorable tonsure, and thus part with his fine head of hair.

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[6] "It is true," said Gregory, in his apology for Maximus (*Orat.* xxiii.), "that he practices our philosophy under a strange garb: still *that* (the white robe, namely) may be taken as a sign of purity of soul. He is a Cynic (*i. e.*, a dog) only in boldness of utterance, in living from day to day, in vigilance for souls, in fawning upon virtue, and in barking at vice."

[7] Gregory says (*Orat.* xxxii.) that he *could not walk in other men's steps*, that he was regarded as a sort of *insane Democritus*, etc., etc.

[8] Translations "from one city to another" were forbidden by Canon 15 of Nicæa and by Apostol. Can. 14.

*He is rejected.*

The wretch was driven from Constantinople, and found no favor with the Emperor, to whom he had the face to appeal. He was also abandoned after awhile, though with some reluctance, by the Alexandrine Clergy and others of his supporters.

*Maximus condemned, Gregory enthroned.*

He fared no better when his case came up before the Synod at Constantinople. He was unanimously condemned by a decree, that "he neither had been nor was a Bishop"; and "all things which had been done, either about him or by him," were declared to be "null and void." At the same time Gregory, who had repeatedly declined to seat himself in the archiepiscopal chair, though urgently pressed by the people and the Emperor, was at length forced to yield to the wishes of his colleagues, and being duly enthroned presided for awhile in the Council.

*Second Question.*

Gregory acceded the more readily to this transaction, that he hoped to be able to harmonize parties in the next great question before them, the schism in the Church of Antioch.

Meletius, the sober and gentle pastor of that distracted flock, a man "whose manners and name savored both of honey," had died shortly after the opening of the Council; and the way seemed clear for a satisfactory settlement, by allowing Paulinus, in compliance with an agreement which Meletius himself had suggested,[10] to occupy at once the vacant chair. But opposed to this equitable arrangement was a strong and bitter feeling, on the part of the Eastern Clergy, against that meddlesome spirit of the West which had originally ordained and had so long sustained Paulinus. The old men of the Synod were, like Gregory, in favor of peace; but at every proposition to that effect the young men[11] flew out "like wasps"—a "whirlwind of dust and noise"—and carried all before them by their "jackdaw clamor." In short, it was determined that Paulinus should be dropped, and that a new Bishop should be ordained for Antioch. So Flavian was duly elected, and the schism continued for some years longer.

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[9] He wished, it appears, to dispense with the *tonsure*: whereupon S. Gregory rallies him not a little. *Carm.* 64.

*Schism in Antioch.*

*Parties in the Council.*

*Flavian elected.*

What was worse, a feeling was engendered which upset the former decision of the Council and proved fatal to the influence of Nazianzen. Instead of standing, as he proposed, "a leader between two bands, now facing the one, and now the other, and blending the two into a perfect choir," he was rather as one crushed between two millstones: the nether stone being the strong Eastern feeling against

*Movement against Gregory.*

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[10] At the opening of the Council, Meletius presided. When he returned from exile, after the death of Valens, he made the following noble speech to Paulinus: "As God committed to me the care of this flock, and as you have received the charge of another, . . . . *let us*, O friend, *unite our flocks*. If the Episcopal chair be to us a matter of strife, let us place the *Holy Gospels* upon it, and seat ourselves one on each side. If I die first, you, O friend, will become sole ruler of the flock: but if your death occur before mine, I will, as far as I am able, tend the flock alone." Theodoret (v. 3) declares that the amicable proposal was rejected by Paulinus: Sozomen implies (vii. 11) that a compact had been made and confirmed by oath. It is a strong testimony to the merits of Meletius, that even the West, which persecuted him while living, consented finally to his canonization.

[11] *De Vit. Carm.* 137. The "young men" argued that the East ought to have the preëminence, because our Lord was born in the East: as good an argument, perhaps, as some that have been advanced on the opposite side.

"Western pride," and the upper coming not long after in the shape of the Egyptian deputation, which, for reasons already intimated, and possibly from some secret grudge, unanimously demanded his deposition. He resolved to be "the Jonah" of this strange storm. With tears he implored the Council to unbind him from the altar on which he lay: with earnest prayers he begged the Lord to "provide a ram in Isaac's stead," for the holocaust of an Episcopate so beset with fiery trials. The Egyptians applauded, the others acquiesced. Gregory was permitted to retire; and Nectarius,[12] a good-natured layman of excellent birth, being duly elected, baptized, and carried through the inferior Orders, was consecrated and seated upon the vacant throne.

*He resigns.*

*Nectarius elected.*

The generous sacrifice was not without effect upon the remaining acts of the Council. In bodies of that kind party spirit is apt to run high at first: for the members being comparatively unknown to one another, and mutually suspicious, the law of self-assertion overrides all others and reigns for awhile supreme. But an unselfish act breaks the force of this law, and makes men aware of their common kin. In this way we may account for the fact that the Second General Council was happier in its issue than they had reason to expect[13] who looked only at the clouds of its inauspicious beginning.

*The Council harmonized.*

First: It settled and completed the Nicene Creed, by adding, or rather by compiling from the numerous orthodox symbols, such expressions as were needed to make it a full Rule of Faith,[14] condemning the Photinian, Macedonian, Apollinarian, Eunomian, and other heresies.

*The Creed settled.*

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[12] It was under this Nectarius that *private confession*—which had taken the place of the old public confession—was abolished, owing to a scandal that occurred in connection with a female penitent. Sozom. viii. 16.

[13] The famous saying of Nazianzen, that he *never knew any good to come of Councils*, is obviously a fruit of his impatience, rather than of his experience. *Epistol.* xlii. *Procopio.*

[14] The additions may be thus expressed in *italics:* "We believe in one

Secondly: It made four canons, to which three were added the year after; the *first* anathematizing the chief heresies, the *fourth* condemning Maximus, the *third* giving the second place of honor to the See of Constantinople or New Rome, and the *second* defining the limits and rights of Dioceses, and forbidding all Bishops to exercise their office out of their own jurisdiction. The numerous cases of interference that had occurred of late rendered this second Canon particularly necessary.

*The Canons.*

Thirdly: It communicated the result of its deliberations to the Emperor, in a Synodical Epistle, thanking God for all that had been done, and asking the Imperial sanction.

*Synodical Epistle.*

The Western Church was not represented in the Council, and was not satisfied with the result, either in reference to

God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father *before all worlds;* God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down *from Heaven,* And was incarnate *of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary,* And was made man, *And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.* He suffered *and was buried;* And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into the heavens, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come *again with glory* to judge both the quick and the dead; *Whose kingdom shall have no end.* And we believe in the Holy Ghost, *the Lord, the Life-Giver, Who proceedeth from the Father* [and the Son], *Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And we believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; And we look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen."* The sources of these additions are concisely given in Hammond's *Councils and Canons;* also in Bright's *Hist. of the Church,* p. 175. The omission of "Holy" as one of the notes of the Church in our Prayer Book version is probably a lapse of some translator: the same error occurs in an old Latin version of the *Concilia,* etc. Colon. 1567, tom. i. p. 489. The words "and the Son" were a later insertion of the Western Church.

Paulinus, whose cause they continued to maintain; to Maximus, whom they took up but soon had to drop, or to the honor of a second place in the hierarchy conferred on Constantinople. These things were complained of by a Western Council holden the same year at Aquileia; and it was proposed by Damasus, Ambrose, and other Italian Bishops, that a new general Synod should convene at Rome. The East, it was contended, ought not to have acted without consulting the West. While the latter assumed to itself no prerogative of judgment, it was entitled to be heard, at least, before a decision was reached.[15] The Easterns, in answer, politely wished[16] they had "wings like a dove to flee to the side of their Western brethren," but felt obliged, nevertheless, to decline the summons: partly that they saw nothing to amend in the action already taken, and partly on the ground of the great inconvenience to themselves and their flocks of absence from their Sees at a time so critical. The dispute gradually died out of itself; and the Council acquired finally an ecumenical character by the acquiescence of all parties in the soundness and wisdom of its theological decisions.

*Council, how received.*

A.D. 382.

*Finally approved.*

Gregory, the meanwhile, had bidden a tender adieu to his beloved flock; to his throne, the cause of so many troubles; to the sweet Anastasia, the resplendent S. Sophia; to the Clergy, Monks, widows, orphans, poor; to the choral Nazarites enlivening the night-watches with their psalms and hymns; to the Emperor and all his court; to the heretics, whom he exhorted to be converted; to the East and West, the upper and lower millstones of his tribulations; to the Holy Apostles, the Guardian Angels, the blessed and adorable Trinity.[17] "I have toiled in this place," said he: "I have gathered a flock where the wolves had scattered; I have given the water of life where water failed; I have sown the seeds of that faith which is built upon God Himself; I have revealed the

*Gregory's Farewell.*

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[15] S. Ambros. Ep. 13, 14.

[16] Theod. v. 9.

[17] S. Greg. Theolog. *Orat.* xlii.

light of the Trinity to those who before were in baleful darkness. Some have been converted by my preaching. Others are not far off. I have reason to hope well of those who at first were unwilling to hearken to me. . . . . My beloved children, keep the good trust committed to you: remember the stones wherewith I have been stoned."

*Life of a Recluse.*

With such words he departed from the scene of his great joys and trials, withdrawing to the life of a recluse in Nazianzus; where he wrote poems and letters and an autobiography in lively verse:[18] where also he made the discovery, so often made before and since, that *the world* is not confined to Constantinople; that though a man may seal his eyes,[19] his ears, his mouth, and pass whole Lents in unbroken silence, yet the buzz of the great Babylon is about him still; and while his heart is striving to entertain angels, Sodom is still battering at its doors and windows.

*Conference of the Sects,* A.D. 383.

Theodosius was much better pleased with the action and result of the General Council. At a third Synod, holden two years later in Constantinople, he undertook, like Constantine, to play the part of a theologian and to reconcile all sects by an open and free discussion.[20] The result was a Babel of angry tongues. But the oral debate failing to produce agreement, the Emperor next required each sect to appear before him with a written statement of its peculiar tenets. They did so; the Confessions of Faith were submitted to the imperial arbiter; the Novatians and Catholics were approved:[21] all the others were rejected and were

*Heresies forbidden.*

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[18] He wrote poetry by way of *penance:* there remain some thirty thousand verses—a mine of good sense, sparkling wit, apt similitudes, lively descriptions; of wisdom in its playful as well as serious moods.

[19] He passed a Lent in silence; resolved never to look upon a woman, etc., etc. His reasons for bridling the tongue are given with much spirit in *Carm.* liv. So strong, however, was Gregory's social feeling that he could not forbear writing to his friends, and even visiting them—appearing before them "like a picture"—during his silent term.

[20] Socrat. v. 10; Sozom. vii. 12.

[21] The Novatians, like the Catholics, confessed the Consubstantial.

even forbidden to hold religious meetings. Catholicism became thus the State religion of the East.

*Emperors and Bishops of the West,* A.D. 383.

In the West there was temporary confusion from the influence of Justina, the Arian widow of Valentinian I., at first in the court of Gratian, and afterwards in that of Valentinian II. But Maximus, who rebelled against Gratian and wrested from him his life with the sovereignty of Britain, Spain, and Gaul, was favorable to the Church and the Nicene cause. Among the prelates, Damasus—assisted by the learning of S. Jerome and of Paulinus, the schismatical pretender to Antioch—upheld with great dignity, earnestness, and devotion the ever growing power of the Roman See: on his death, he was succeeded by Siricius, the author of the earliest genuine "decretal epistle." S. Ambrose governed in Milan: S. Martin of Tours converted the peasantry in Gaul. These latter names, however, are of special significance in the history of the Western Church, and will enter more at large into the remaining chapters of this Book.

A.D. 384.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### MISSIONS.—MONASTICISM.—S. MARTIN.

*Fourth Century Polemical.*

THE life of the fourth century was largely polemical, and the war against Arian and pagan errors within the Empire itself left little time or strength for purely missionary efforts.

*The troubled Pool.*

Still there was a steady advance in the conversion of the world: partly from an inherent aggressiveness of the Truth causing it to press in at every opening, partly from that wondrous ordering of Providence which made the decline of the Roman State a Bethesda, as it were

—a pool divinely troubled, that the nations one by one might be brought to it and healed of their barbarism.

*Conversion of Iberia.*

From Armenia, converted early in the century, the Gospel was conveyed by a female captive to the warlike nation of the Iberians,[1] a people dwelling about midway between the Black Sea and the Caspian. It happened that a child in that country, being taken ill, was carried from house to house, according to a custom still common in barbarous tribes, to be benefited by the experience of the simple neighborhood. The Christian woman saw him, and prayed in the name of Christ for his recovery. The prayer was granted. Not long after, a similar cure was wrought in like manner upon the queen of the Iberians; and the king was almost persuaded to be a Christian. He hesitated, however, and was in great perplexity. The cloud upon his mind was dispelled by an event which delivered him at the same time from bodily peril: for on a certain occasion, as he was hunting alone upon the mountains, a storm came on with a sudden darkness; he bethought himself of Christ and prayed for light; Christ gave him light, and he and his family believed. The people followed the example of their prince. An embassy was dispatched with the glad tidings to Constantine, who sent them a Bishop and company of priests; so that Iberia soon took a place among the Christian nations.

*Prayer for Light.*

*The Church in Persia.*

From Osrhoëne and Armenia the Truth flowed into Persia;[2] but the religion of the Magi, a system strongly organized, and pure and elevated as compared with paganism in general, persecuted the Church with ruthless vigor, and more than sixteen thousand martyrs sealed their faith with their blood. Constantine wrote to Sapor in their behalf; but the power of the Magi, the malignity of the Jews, and a national prejudice against the Gospel as the religion of their enemies the Romans, kept the Persian Church, and with it the Armenian, in a state of depression. By the end of the fourth century it became aggressive again. A Bishop named Abdas ventured to burn a Fire-temple. This naturally awakened a new persecution; and the faithful were involved once more in a storm of indescribable horrors.

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[1] Socrat. i. 20; Theod. i. 23.

[2] Sozom. ii. 8–15; Theod. v. 38; Socrat. vii. 8, 18, 20.

*India or Abyssinia.*

The "interior of India," by which is meant probably some portion of Abyssinia, was evangelized anew by Frumentius, a Christian captive,[3] who found favor with the chiefs of the country, led them to desire the Gospel, and afterwards, returning to his home in Egypt, begged S. Athanasius to send a Bishop among them. The Saint replied, with his usual readiness, "Who better than you can remove the ignorance of this people?" So he laid his hands on him and sent him back to the work.

*The Goths on the Danube.*

*Bishop Ulfilas.*

The Goths on both sides of the Danube[4] had learned something of Christianity in the latter half of the third century: for the flood of invasion which swept through Thrace into Asia Minor and thence back, in the times of Decius and his successors, carried with it the Gospel in that form in which it is often most effectual, so that the captors were led captive by the truth which they had persecuted. Constantine, by his victories and treaties, confirmed them in the faith; and a Bishop of theirs, named Theophilus, attended the Council of Nicæa. At a later period, Valens allowed the same people to settle south of the Danube, as a bulwark of the Empire against the northern hordes, and a new field for the planting of Arianism. For it so happened that their Bishop, Ulfilas, casting around in all quarters for help in his evangelic labors, fell in with Eudoxius and others of the Court party, and purchased their good-will at the price of a politic subscription to the Creed of Ariminum. He also gave his people an alphabet and a translation of the Scriptures. Christianity thus spread among the Goths and other Barbarians, in a form which fell short of the Nicene doctrine,[5] but could hardly be said to contradict it. Many of the converts were tried by persecutions: but "having embraced Christianity, with great simplicity of mind, they despised the present life for the faith of Christ."

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[3] Socrat. i. 19; Theod. i. 23.

[4] Sozom. ii. 6; Socrat. i. 18; ii. 41; iv. 33; Theod. iv. 37.

*The Saracens.*

In the reign of the same Valens, Moses, a pious and honest monk, converted the Saracens,[6] with Mabia their queen. These people were engaged at the time in a devastating war against the Romans. They offered peace on the condition that Moses should be made their Bishop. The good monk accordingly was torn from his cell in the desert and carried to Alexandria, to be consecrated by Lucius, the Arian prelate. But he refused to accept the laying on of *such* hands. "Not for matters of faith do I object," said he: "it is for your infamous cruelty to the brethren. A Christian is no striker, no brawler, no fighter; for it becometh not a servant of the Lord to fight. But your deeds cry out against you: your hands are stained with blood." His scruples were respected, and he received ordination at the hands of some of the exiled orthodox Bishops.

*The Seed sowing itself.*

All these are instances rather of spontaneous growth than of missionary effort in the modern sense of the word. It was the seed sowing itself: there was on the part of the Church, however, a readiness to take advantage of such openings as Providence presented, and to send laborers to every spot in which the harvest seemed to have begun.

*Struggle in the West.*

In the West, the Empire was engaged in a desperate struggle for the borders of the Rhine and the Danube; and the spread of the Gospel fluctuated with the shifting fortunes of aggression from the one side or the other along that line.

Paganism, in fact, remained to be conquered within the Empire. Christianity was strong only in the cities: the rude country folk, half slaves, half savages, clung with fond tenacity to their old superstitions. And doubtless, at a time when the ramparts of civilization were all giving way; when, partly from the internal weakness of the Roman State, and partly from the steady pressure of invasion on every side, there seemed imminent peril of a relapse into barbarism: they would have clung to their idolatry much longer than they did, had their conversion been left to the ordinary ministry, or to the methods which had grown out of the wants of a more polished class.

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[5] See the Creed in Socrat. ii. 41.

[6] Socrat. iv. 36; Theod. iv. 23.

*Strength of Paganism.*

But precisely at this hour of need there was a mysterious revolution going on in society, which, according to the point of view taken, may be regarded as the height of wisdom or the height of insanity; but which, in either case, was destined to exert an influence, equally incalculable and irresistible, upon the growth of the Church and the progress of the human race. By the end of the fourth century Monachism[7] had already become a great power on the earth. It had all the freshness, confidence, and vitality of a special mission. It was the "rough garment," as it were, of the Gospel preached to the poor: it was Christianity adapted to the coarseness of rustic apprehension. In itself, indeed, and in the fantastic exhibitions which accompanied its rise in the East, it seemed merely a new form of that sensuous enthusiasm, that many-headed dragon of the primitive Church, which developed in the second century into the Phrygian phrenzy: but in the course it ran for a thousand years or more, in the economical uses it was providentially made to subserve, it appears in history rather as Behemoth yoked to the Gospel car; as Leviathan given to be "meat for the people in the wil-

*Monachism.*

*Its economical uses.*

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[7] Socrat. iv. 23–26; Sozom. vi. 28–34; S. Pachom. Abb. *Regul.*, etc; S. P. N. Macarii Ægypt. *Homil.;* J. Cassian. *De Institut. Cœnob.;* Nilus *Monach. Institut.*, etc. For these and others see *Bibliothec. Vet. Patrum*, tomm. iv. v.; S. Chrysostom, *adv. Oppugnat. Vit. Monast.;* Epistles of S. Jerome, S. Basil, and others; Montalembert, *Les Moines d' Occident;* Gieseler, §§ 95–97.

derness"; one of those Divine upturnings and unsettlings in the social state by which laborers are *thrown out*[8] into the whitening harvest; one of those *disturbings*[9] of the house of the woman in the Parable, which are needed for the recovery of the lost "piece of silver"; as, in short, a gigantic extravagance tamed and utilized, and mysteriously directed to a work which Religion, in a more sober mood, might never have undertaken.

*State of Society.*

Enthusiasm doubtless was the inner spring of the movement; but enthusiasm alone could hardly have sustained it, in a healthy state of society. A high civilization that had run to seed, a tree which had lost the power to hold its fruit on the bough, a social condition in which "all things were turned upside down," which good men[10] compared to a house on fire or a ship in the hands of a drunken crew, and amid all this an exquisite sensibility to sin and misery, caused whole communities to flow out into the desert wilds; so that, not in Egypt alone, but in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, the skin-clad tribes of "philosophers" were soon reckoned by tens of thousands.

*S. Antony.*

The life of S. Antony[11] was a type of the general course of Monasticism. The feverish desire of "angelic" life, the sundering of all social ties, the battle in solitude with lusts and demons, the creation of a new and fantastic intellectual world—a world so remote from ordinary experience that its very language seems mythic and hieroglyphic[12]—finally, the multitude pouring forth into the wilderness "to see" the phenomenon, and the anchoret forced into the world again as a prophet, preacher, and pioneer in a new line of Christian conquest: all this was more or less exhibited in the career of Antony, though its full significance was not seen for some ages after.

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[8] Luke, x. 2: ὅπως ἐκβάλλῃ seems to imply a vigorous *ejectment* of the laborers—who, perhaps, are comfortably housed and taking their ease.

[9] Luke, xv. 8: instead of *everrit* some of the fathers read *evertit; i. e.*, the woman *disturbs* the house, turns it upside down, in search of the lost piece of silver. See *Catena Aurea.*

[10] "I wish there were *no need* of monasteries; but when everything in society is turned upside down . . . . . we ought not to find fault with those who escape such a miry and troublous sea, and take refuge in a peaceful haven." S. Chrysostom, *adv. Oppugnat. Vit. Monast.* i. 7.

[11] See Book III. chap. vi. of this History.

[12] At a certain stage of intellectual excitement, the mind, without losing its reverence for truth, becomes demoralized with regard to mere matters of

*Other Monks.*

The example, in all its extravagance, was followed by innumerable imitators. Pachomius for fifteen years never slept but in an upright posture; Macarius the younger lived six months naked, in a marsh, to be stung by gnats; Theonas, a mighty scholar, observed for thirty years an unbroken silence. Yet amid these and thousands of such like whims, the spirit of order was reasserting itself; the social instinct was returning under another form; the wild den of the anchoret was becoming the nucleus of the *cenobium*, *laura*, *mandra*, or *monastery*, where men lived together as "brothers," under an Abbot or Archimandrite.

*The Cenobium.*

Pachomius was the first of the solitaries who was called to be a ruler and legislator. On Tabenna, an island of the Nile, he gave laws to a community of monks, which, with a similar establishment for nuns, under the direction of his sister, numbered, by the end of the fourth century, some fifty thousand. Ammon was at the head of a similar society on the Nitrian mountain; another was planted by Macarius the elder in the wilderness of Sketis; Serapion, with about one thousand brothers, in the neighborhood of Arsinoë, raised corn for the supply of the other monks, and for gratuitous distribution among the poor; Oxyrynchus swarmed with a population of ten thousand of the one sex, and twenty thousand of the other, devoted to the *virgin, philosophic and angelic life*. There were like communities springing up spontaneously, each with

fact; the imagination and the reason dissolve partnership, as it were, and move in separate spheres, the latter retaining its full strength in certain things, but exerting no controlling power upon the former. Such seems to me to have been the mental state of the early monks: a state in which *myths* are manufactured without any intention to deceive.

its own code of laws and peculiar ways, all over the Eastern world.

*Anchorets, Watchers, and others.*

But as numbers increased, "the world" found its way into these lesser worlds. Hence a process of separation going on continuously. Smaller societies drew off from the tainted air of the larger ones; and from these again the more fervid spirits seceded. The *anchoret* looked with pity upon the luxury of the cenobite; the *watchers*[13] warred against sleep; the *grazers* roved and ate grass like cattle; finally, the *pillar-saints* gave a lead beyond which emulation could go no further.

*Married Monks.*

On the other hand, some combined monastic with social duties.[14] Though, as a general rule, "a monk out of the desert" was considered a "fish out of water," yet city monks, and perhaps married monks, were not unknown. There were also hordes of wild beggars whose fanaticism was hardly tinctured with any element of Christian doctrine.

*Monastic Wisdom.*

*Maxims.*

The character of the better class of ascetics was often a singular mixture of visionary enthusiasm and coarse and hard common-sense. Ammon, a newly-wedded bridegroom, won his young bride to the "angelic" life by "descanting upon the burdens and discomforts of rearing a family"; yet the same Ammon would not swim a stream for fear of the "immodesty" of seeing his own body naked. Pambos took nineteen years to learn the meaning of the words, "I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue"; but it was the same Pambos who wept on seeing an actress, "because," said he, "I exert myself less to please my God than she to please filthy men." Isidore, less diffident, declared that for forty years he had not been conscious of sin, even in thought. In many cases, however, the monks learned from their own experience that "bodily exercise" is not the only thing needful towards the perfection of Christian character. The "dry diet," said one, "must be combined with love." The same judicious brother recommended "ministering to the sick" as a better specific than fasting, even, against nightly visitations of ghosts and fiends. In short, amid all the extravagances of monastic life there was a "philosophy" that did honor to human nature: and oftentimes those who in their own practice had been most extreme,[15] were the most considerate and charitable in the rules they laid down for others.

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[13] These belong rather to the fifth century. See Evagrius, i. 21.

[14] Gieseler, § 95, nn. 41–48.

*Monastic Rules.*

They found, in fact, that religious enthusiasm, like all other passions, needs to be restrained and guided.[16] Hence manual labor, sometimes in the cells and sometimes in outdoor employments, distinguished the better class of Egyptian monasteries. "A working monk has but a single devil to contend against, an idle one is torn by thousands." A diet, not too abundant nor yet too spare, was a wise addition to this wholesome rule. There were regular hours, from twice to six times a day, for prayers: private vows were to "dart up" constantly, each breath was to be an "ejaculation." The times and manner of meals, of sleep, of recreation, were prescribed with the minuteness of military law, and enforced with the rigor of military drill. Thus the tendency to extravagance was kept in check:[17] and if, in spite of all, there were cases not a few of melancholy, frenzy, demoniacal possession, or even suicide, it is true, on the other hand, that the subjects of this discipline were not in general

*A Check upon Enthusiasm.*

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[15] S. Jerome, especially, profited by his experience in that way, and draws vivid pictures of the perils of asceticism. See Gieseler, § 95, nn. 11, 28.

[16] The *Homilies* of S. Macarius are admirable persuasions to a sober, rational, well-ordered piety: so much so that they have been accused of inculcating religious *apathy*. But the most fervid monks were often moderate in their style of preaching.

[17] Here, I think, is the essential difference between Christian and heathen Monachism. The tendency to solitary life being in itself a sort of fever—not a disease, but a violent effort of nature to throw off disease—heathenism lets the fever run; Christianity controls it and turns it to some good account.

the most healthy minds, but oftener the mere wrecks and waifs[18] of an effete civilization.

*Special Mission.*

*Preaching.*

The state of society and general turn of mind, which led so many to adopt the monastic life, made the system useful in a way that the first ascetics probably had never intended. The oddities of the monks attracted attention. Their simplicity and benevolence and untutored tongues[19] won for them the favor of the common people. They thus became preachers against their will. At a time, moreover, when the ordinary style of the pulpit was too theological for heathen ears, the voice that was content to cry in the wilderness, that harped with strident force upon the elementary topics of temperancer, ighteousness, and judgment to come, had a peculiar charm for the mass of men; and multitudes, not from the country merely, but from the cities and towns, eagerly poured forth to hear it.

*Valens persecutes the Monks.*

In the times of Valens, Monachism had grown so popular that it was objected to as a drain upon the resources of the State; which served as a pretext for persecution—the real reason being the zeal of the monks for the Nicene Faith. Many of them, therefore, were pressed into the army: those who refused were beaten to death with clubs. The usual effect of persecution followed. Enthusiasm soured into fanaticism. Hordes of heated zealots roved through the East, waging a predatory war upon paganism, and differing little in temper—however they might differ in creed—from those pests of the North African Church, the Circumcellions.[20]

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[18] Hence those Fathers who have left the darkest pictures of monastic life were, nevertheless, in their day, the chief promoters of it. And why? Because, I think, they judged a monastery much as *we* judge a hospital. A retreat for the sick *must* have sick people in it; and among them there will be some incurables.

[19] S. Antony, for example, used to speak in the vernacular of the country: the Church, in general, knew only Greek.

[20] It was probably a lively remembrance of the excesses of these fanatics which caused Monachism to be so dreaded and hated in the African Church. See Gieseler, §96, n. 14.

To S. Basil belongs the credit of utilizing the system to a greater extent than any one had done before him. He aimed at a union of the contemplative life and the active, and by bringing the monks into closer relations with the city Clergy, he made useful missionaries of them among the heathen, and valuable auxiliaries in the war still waged upon the Arian heresy.

*S. Basil's Rule.*

As the movement advanced towards the West, it assumed more and more of this utilitarian character. There was a wholesome prejudice against its more fantastic features, with no great faith in its dreams and miracles. It secured a mighty advocate, however, in S. Athanasius, whose exile was shared by some Egyptian monks; and, at a later date, in S. Jerome. The latter developed it in its harshest form,[21] and was soon obliged to retire with his female followers into Palestine. S. Ambrose of Milan was equally zealous and more successful. The praise of virginity was ever on his tongue: the establishment of retreats for ascetics of either sex was his constant effort. But to win the cordial approbation of the Western mind it was necessary that Monachism should prove its mission: without ceasing to aspire after works of wonder, it had to show a capability for dealing with practical questions, for meeting, in fact, some one or other of the pressing wants of the times.

*Monachism in the West.*

Its position was secured in this respect, and a field was opened in which for some centuries it labored almost alone, chiefly by the efforts of S. Martin of Tours, the Apostle of the Gallic peasantry.

*Its Founder.*

This remarkable man,[22] the son of a heathen soldier, born in Pannonia, and brought up in Italian Pavia, became a catechumen at ten years of age, and at twelve had set his heart on the life of an anchoret: but being pressed into the army he served from his fifteenth to his twentieth year, having received, the meanwhile, the gift of baptism. It was during this part of his career that he gave a famous proof of his goodness of heart by sharing his cloak with a beggar at the gate of Amiens. The next night he saw the Lord clothed in the half garment thus bestowed. Having left the army he indulged for many years his passion for the ascetic life. S. Hilary of Poitiers, his nearest friend, endeavored to entice him into Holy Orders, but he would accept no station in the Ministry higher than that of an Exorcist. In the persecution under Constantius he won the title of Confessor. Auxentius, the Arian Bishop, drove him forth from Milan. He betook himself to an island in the Tuscan Sea, where he founded a monastery; afterwards, on the return of Hilary from exile, he established another religious house in the neighborhood of Poitiers: the first examples of the kind in the Western Church, though the monastic rule of life had been introduced by S. Athanasius, and adopted by Eusebius of Vercellæ and other prominent ecclesiastics.

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[21] The culture of *filth* is one of the least pleasant features of ascetic life: yet a noble, refined, and educated woman, under the instruction of such a man as Jerome, could be brought to regard uncleanliness and squalor as a special merit.

[22] His life is written in prose by Sulpicius Severus, the author of two books of *Sacred History;* and in verse by Paulinus of Nola.

*S. Martin born,* A.D. 316.

*He founds Monasteries.*

The reputation he had acquired for miracles and good works secured his election to the episcopate of Tours, in the eighth year of the reign of Valentinian and Valens. The people were unanimous in their choice, and the Saint, being decoyed out of his cell by a summons to visit a sick woman, was seized and consecrated: some of the prelates, however, were shocked at his "vile mien, sordid garments, and unkempt hair," and he encountered at their hands a persistent opposition. Bad Bishops,[23] it is said, were the only bitter enemies he ever had.

*Bishop of Tours,* A.D. 372.

On becoming a Bishop he did not cease to be a monk: he lived at first in a cell attached to his Church, afterwards in a monastery not far from the city, where some eighty brethren, many of whom were of gentle blood, submitted to a rule which (unlike that of the Eastern ascetics) excluded manual labor and left more time for prayer and study. Chosen companies of these went with him wherever he went: the Saint walking by himself, absorbed in prayer, the rest following in groups at a respectful distance. Cities he avoided as much as possible. He chose for himself a field where no Gospel laborer had been before him. For, as already intimated, the mission from Asia in the second century, and the large appointment of Bishops under Roman auspices in the third, had evangelized only the towns and the upper classes in Gaul: the mass of the country people were ignorant, rude, and stubborn idolaters.

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[23] The opposition between the normal and abnormal—between the regular and irregular—between the old and the new—crops out continually in monastic history.

*Ascetic Life.*

Among this class, then, the zealous Bishop labored; going about from place to place with his devoted band, healing the sick, it was said, casting out devils, cleansing lepers by a kiss, raising the dead, breaking up the shrines of demon-worship, preaching how "men should forsake the present life and give themselves wholly to the Lord Jesus Christ": in short, impressing the rude minds of the peasantry[24] with such a sense of Divine grace and power that he seemed in their eyes a living miracle, and consequently everything he did appeared miraculous. It is worthy of note, that one of the first exam-

*New Field of Labor.*

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[24] Miracles are so interwoven into his life, that some mention of them seems necessary towards understanding the character of his influence. As to the *reality* of these wonders it may be observed, (1) that (on the showing of Sulpicius, *Dialog.* i. 18) they were credited only by *the people* and by men in foreign parts—the Clergy *in Gaul* were incredulous; (2) the monastic mode of life and the monastic *mind* was (on the showing of the same Sulpicius, *De Vit. B. M.* xxv.) visionary and credulous to an extraordinary degree; (3) S. Martin was a miracle of benignity and goodness, and the impression he made upon his followers was perfectly overwhelming: see the rich gush of feeling with which Sulpicius describes it. *De Vit. B. M* xxvi. Allowing for these facts, we may perhaps *explain* the miracles of S. Martin, without impeaching the veracity of his biographer: at the same time, considering his *peculiar* mission, he may have had tokens of the Divine blessing and favor greater than our philosophy is ready to admit.

ples of his zeal against superstition was occasioned by a Christian, not a heathen, error. An altar near his monastery was much frequented, by reason of the relics of some martyr supposed to be buried there. But as no one could tell the name of the martyr the Saint became sceptical and instituted a searching investigation. His doubts were settled by a vision. A "grim and sordid shade" arose from the consecrated spot, and announced itself the ghost of a robber executed for his crimes. The altar, of course, was removed, and "the people were freed from the error of that superstition."

*Warfare against Superstition.*

Whether in consequence of the miracles attributed to him, or as the natural effect of invincible courage united to a childlike simplicity and tenderness of heart, S. Martin experienced less opposition at the hands of the pagans than might have been expected. On one occasion, when he was demolishing a temple, the crowd stood and looked on in impotent amazement: on another, a bold assassin was unnerved by the Saint's calmly laying bare his neck to the knife. On another occasion still, he so tamed a savage crowd by the sanctity of his preaching that they rose with one accord and destroyed their temples.

*Influence over the Pagans.*

Wherever he rooted up idolatry he took care to plant the Gospel in its stead: the shrines and temples were replaced by churches and monasteries. That these latter did good service in an age which required a certain roughness as well as readiness in those who undertook to reclaim it, may be inferred from the honor in which they were held. The monks, it is true, introduced not a few superstitions in place of the supplanted fables. It may even be said that they substituted a Christian,[25] for a heathen, paganism. Yet to any one who considers the vileness and atrocity of the latter error, as con-

*Churches and Monasteries planted.*

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[25] Sulpicius gives us a glimpse of the *wild dreams* of monastic life: how one brother thought himself Christ, and even a Bishop was so deluded as to fall down and worship him; how another personated John, etc.—cases occurring so frequently that Sulpicius conjectured the day of Antichrist to be

trasted with the pure, though visionary, ideal presented by the former, the gain to humanity and religion must still appear immense. Other men, possibly, might have done the work better: but, then, three centuries had passed and no other men had arisen to undertake it. The learned Clergy were urban in their tastes. While we may sympathize, therefore, to a certain extent, with those prelates who were disgusted at S. Martin's "sordid raiment and unkempt hair," we may at the same time thank God that the conversion of the poor pagans was not left to such prelates. Had it been so left, the struggle with barbarism might have resulted in darker ages than those to which the world was destined.

*Good Service of the Monks.*

But to return to the good Bishop: much as he avoided cities and the Court, his light was of that kind which could not be hidden. As the Apostle and patron of the poor, he was obliged for their sakes to stand before kings. In the case of Valentinian, who, though an orthodox ruler, was prejudiced against the Saint by Justina, his Arian wife, he had almost to force his way into the palace: but, when he at last gained admission, the honest prince recognized at once his superior merit, and granted him all and even more than he desired. With Maximus, the usurper of the Gauls and the murderer of Gratian, he found it more difficult to deal in a friendly way, and for some time declined all communion with him. The tyrant succeeded, however, in justifying himself, and the Saint once or twice consented to dine in the palace. On one of these occasions, when Maximus handed him the cup, intending to do himself the grace of drinking after him, the Bishop tasted the wine and then passed it on to a certain Presbyter: the lowliest minister of God was superior in his eyes to the loftiest monarch.

*S. Martin and the Court.*

A.D. 383.

But it was particularly irksome to S. Martin to associate with the hard and worldly prelates of the usurper's Court. Cruelty

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at hand. *De Vit. B. M.* xxv. To balance this, there were many noble and beautiful dreams, which attained their *apotheosis* in Dante's Divine Comedy.

in all shapes he deeply abhorred: the very birds and beasts were under his protection, and he is even said to have performed miracles in their behalf. In the same way, he set a high value on the spirit of forgiveness, and regarded the power of absolution as the choicest gem in the crown of the Ministry. When the Devil once tried to argue him into the belief that there were some sins too grievous to be remitted, he answered the arch-tempter: "If *thou*, O wretch, wouldst cease from hunting men, and repent thee of thy deeds, I would promise the Lord's pardon even to thee!"[26] There was little of this temper among the Court Clergy. On the contrary, it was through the influence of these, headed by Idacius and Ithacius, that sentence of death was pronounced, and a death-warrant signed, against the deluded followers of the heretic Priscillian.[27] S. Martin pleaded hard for a reversal of the sentence. When he failed to obtain it, he even refused to commune any longer with his cruel colleagues; and though he subsequently yielded the point, in order to prevent further bloodshed, which Maximus threatened in case he should persist, yet his conscience was uneasy under such a burden; an Angel rebuked him; his wonder-working power seemed to be going from him; and, to recover his wonted peace of mind, he thenceforth held aloof, not only from the offending prelates, but from all Councils and assemblies in which they were likely to be present. It is honorable to the Church of that age that his protest met the warm approbation of Ambrose of Milan, Siricius of Rome, and not a few others.

*His Goodness of Heart.*

*He pleads for the Followers of Priscillian.*

*He holds aloof from Councils.*

S. Martin left numerous disciples, and his example became the law of missionary work for many ages after him. It was, in fact, not merely an adaptation to the wants of a class of men which lay beyond the reach of ordinary methods: it was an honest and wonderfully persistent effort to avoid the great danger to which a triumphant religion is exposed. This was beautifully illustrated by one of the many visions that occurred to the Saint. For, on one occasion, the Devil came before him in the form of Christ, clothed in purple and gold and celestial splendor. The Saint looked hard at the bright phantom, but spake not a word. "Dost thou not know me, Martin?" said the tempter—"why art thou silent in the presence of thy Lord?" He quietly replied, "I am looking for the print of the nails!" Thereupon the fiend vanished, and a foul odor filled the cell, showing plainly enough that incredulity,[28] in this instance at least. was not without its warrant and blessing.

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[26] Sulpic. Sever. *Dialog.* iii. 15.

[27] In this case the plea of the Bishops was as strong as any that was ever made for religious persecution. The Priscillianists were condemned (1) *by a civil magistrate;* (2) not for heresy, but for alleged *filthy and wicked practices;* (3) the persecuting prelates (fearing scandal) *avoided all open complicity* in pronouncing the sentence of death; (4) the sentence was *confirmed* and *carried out* by the secular arm. Sulpic. Sever. *Sacr. Hist.* ii. 65.

*His Example a rule of Mission Work.*

And such, with due allowance for the trials of the age in which they lived, was the spirit and temper of the monks in general. The regal magnificence in which State-alliance had robed the Church, could not but cause perplexity to earnest and simple souls. Yet they durst not condemn the splendor in itself: they could only look fixedly and wistfully at the dubious phenomenon, in hopes of some better sign of the Divinity within. And they looked, in the main, with honest and steady eyes. They magnified the Cross, they searched perseveringly for the *stigmata* of the Passion. Even when self-denial made them popular, and popularity brought wealth, and wealth bred corruption, so that the print of the nails could no longer be seen: yet, ever as this happened, the old spirit revived, reform began anew,[29] the wistful

*The Print of the Nails looked for.*

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[28] A commentator (*Geo. Hornius*) here remarks: "This story savors of unbelieving Thomas." *De Vit. B. Martin.* xxv.

[29] The history of Monachism is a continuous chain of efforts at reform—Martin of Tours in one age, Martin Luther in another—in every link of which we may discern the same curious mixture of rapt enthusiasm and audacious common sense.

and doubting look of S. Martin was repeated, and splendor vanished with a "foul odor," to be replaced by fresh efforts at primitive simplicity, with zeal again and again awakened for the preaching of the Gospel to the poor.

*Mission of the Monks.*

Such, then, was the instrument prepared in the fourth century for that missionary work, involving toil and self-denial almost without a parallel, by which gradually the rude sires of modern Europe were reclaimed from paganism, and the foundations of a new era of Christian progress were slowly and laboriously compacted.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CHURCH AND STATE.—AMBROSE AND THEODOSIUS.

*Position of the Church settled.*

It fell to the lot of Theodosius to crown the work of his predecessors in the establishment of the Church as the religion of the Empire. He gave it that position in reference to the State, to heathenism and dissent,[1] which it afterwards retained, and beyond which it made only occasional and temporary advances.

*First Christian Emperors.*

Neither Constantine nor his sons had attempted much more, with regard to the old religion, than to discourage, or, perhaps, in some matters to reform it. Their theory, at least, was that of toleration.

Christians, indeed, were reinstated[2] in rights of which they had been robbed, and for posts of trust and honor were preferred to heathen. *Privileges of the Church.* Churches were built, and the Clergy in part maintained, at the cost of the several cities. Ecclesiastics were exempted from certain taxes, and *Exemptions.* from offices involving pecuniary burdens: exemptions which soon began to crowd the lower grades of the Ministry, and had in course of time to be modified. The Church was allowed to receive legacies. In special honor of *Honors.* the Gospel, the punishment of crucifixion was abandoned; there was a repeal of the old laws against celibacy; the manumission of slaves, once a purely civil act, was elevated to the dignity of a religious rite, by allowing it to be performed in church. *The Lord's Day.* Finally, Sunday was made a Feast of universal obligation: all work and traffic were to cease thereon, save only the necessary labors of agriculture. In the army it was to be observed by a prayer to the Supreme Being.

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[1] Gieseler's *Ch. H.* §§75–79 (Smith's Am. Ed.); Rüdiger *de Stat. et Conditio. Paganorum*, etc.; Beugnot, *Hist. de la Destruct. du Pagan. en Occident;* De Broglie, *Hist. de L'Eglise*, etc., I. i. chap. ii.; Cod. Theodos., etc.

[2] Euseb. *Vit. Constant.* ii. 20–24, 36–44; iv. 18, 19; Sozom. i. 8, 9; Cod. Theodos. xvi. t. 2, l. 3, 6; Cod. Justin. vii. t. 22, l. 3.

On the other hand, as sovereign Pontiff of the State religion, an office not easily abandoned by a prince tenacious of his rights, *Heathen Abuses corrected.* the Emperor discountenanced, in "the old persuasion,"[3] all that was licentious, malific, or of ill example, and for that purpose set on foot a commission to inquire into abuses.[4] Hence temples of Venus were destroyed in Libanus and the Phœnician Heliopolis, and the same fate befell a shrine of Æsculapius at Ægæ. Priestcraft was exposed by breaking up images and bringing to light the machinery within; secret sacrifices were forbidden, and magic or divination for evil ends, though for the cure of sickness or *Chastity honored.* the averting of storms it was still allowed. The *Christian* virtue of chastity was honored by extremely severe penalties on its opposites. Gladiator-shows and other immoral exhibitions were prohibited in New Rome: the old city, in this and other matters, was left very much to its own devices. The Emperor, the meanwhile, showed himself a friend of religion in general, by tolerating stated and public sacrifices, and by insisting in cases of emergency upon due consultation of the Haruspices.

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[3] Vetus mos, præterita usurpatio: so Constantine called it.

[4] Euseb. *Vit. Con.* ii. 44–48, 56, 60; iii. 54–58; iv. 16, 23, 25; Cod. Theodos. ix. t. 16, l. 1, 3; xii. t. 1, l. 21; t. 5, l. 2; xvi. t. 10, l. 4; Beugnot, *Hist. de la Destruct. du Pagan.*

*Sacrifices allowed.*

It was Constantine's wish, in short, that men should not throw off such religion as they had until they were ready for something better: he dreaded atheism more than superstition, and his hostility to the latter hardly went beyond those bounds which had long since been set by the admirable good sense of Roman legislation.

*Dread of Atheism.*

His sons were somewhat more zealous, but their efforts were directed in the main by the same principle. Christianity, in fact, needed little help in the way of new enactments. The old laws, fairly carried out, would do away with those rites that ministered to vice; and these being done away, the rest of the heathen fabric would fall of itself. Constantius, however, prohibited sacrifices, on penalty of death: an edict little observed and not very rigorously enforced, especially in Rome and Alexandria. But as idolatry became unfashionable, retiring to rural districts under the name of *paganism*, the old shrines lost their votaries; and Christians, heathenized in temper by the evils of the times, began to show their zeal by acts of violence. Hence numerous cases of fierce iconoclasm, winked at by Constantius, but severely punished by the Apostate his successor. Hence, also, a longer lease of life to idolatry among those inveterate conservatives, the literary class.

*Growing Zeal.*

*Sacrifices forbidden.*

*Destruction of Temples.*

The brief reaction under Julian taught a lesson of moderation which was not altogether fruitless. Jovian was a Catholic, but tolerated dissent. Valentinian and Valens forbade bloody sacrifices, and found it necessary to break up the nests of treason which sheltered themselves under the name of philosophy: magic was prohibited, sophists were banished or put to death, books on occult science were collected

*Magic Rites punished.*

and destroyed. On the other hand, a necessity had arisen for pruning the luxuriance of the Church. Valentinian enacted that ecclesiastics should not haunt the houses of widows or female wards, nor should they accept donations or bequests from women connected with them by spiritual ties: an edict upon which S. Jerome remarked, "I complain not of the law, but I grieve that we should have deserved it."

*The Church restrained.*

All these Emperors lived and reigned the acknowledged heads of heathenism; and, when they died, were duly enrolled, by a still heathen Senate, among the gods. Gratian was the first to reject the title of Pontifex Maximus. He also removed the altar of Victory from the Senate-house, and deprived the temples, priests, and Vestal Virgins of their remaining immunities and of all revenues from the State.

*Gratian refuses the Title of Pontiff.*

For favors of this kind the Church paid dearly in the sacrifice of her independence: the Emperor combining in his own person the prestige of the old pontificate, and whatever of influence in Church affairs belonged in the first ages to the Christian laity. Hence an undue interference in matters both of discipline and of doctrine. Letters of admonition addressed to the leading Bishops; Councils called, moderated, influenced, approved, upheld by legal pains; judicial decisions quashed, or modified, or new trials ordered; Episcopal elections interfered with; Creeds, orthodox or the reverse, forced upon recusants: such things were, indeed, excesses of that *episcopate from without* which Constantine assumed, and they were more or less protested against, but they were not the less dangerous on that account. They indicated, in fact, a great and undefined power, the encroachments of which might prove fatal to the spiritual character of the Church. The good sense of Valentinian led him to moderation in the exercise of this power. "Let the priests," said he, "attend to Church affairs, and assemble where they will." Gratian also saw the evils resulting from imperial interference, and willingly sanctioned that Canon of Sardica, which, with a view to greater equity in synodical decisions,

*Loss of Liberty to the Church.*

*State Encroachments.*

lodged a power of granting new trials on appeal in the hands of Julius the Roman Bishop.

*Encroachments of Church Power.*

Nor were the encroachments by any means confined to one side.[5] Episcopal *arbitration,* which served in the first centuries to keep Christians from going to law before the heathen, continued under Constantine and his successors to save many sheep from the sharp shears of the Roman Courts, and elevated the standard of equity and mercy. The custom grew into a law; so that finally the Bishops exercised a patronage of all oppressed and dependent persons; were the sole judges in civil and (in course of time) even of criminal cases, where the Clergy, monks, or nuns were concerned; and were allowed a sort of equity jurisdiction in general. The effect of this was to soften the harder features of Roman law.[6] The relations of parents to children, of husbands to wives, of masters to slaves, of creditors to debtors, of patrons to clients, were gradually improved on the side of humanity. The right of sanctuary also was transferred from the temples to the churches. On the whole, however, the Church encroached upon the province of the State less by altering the laws than by exercising boldly the power of intercession: a power which did much good, though in times of polemical excitement it was occasionally abused.

*Effect on the Roman Laws.*

*Conflict of Church and State.*

But to attain a high ground in relations of this kind required, on the Church's part, a spirited struggle: a struggle not, as in previous cases, with heretical princes only, who were amenable to no law, but with a wise and powerful and orthodox sovereign. Such a sovereign was found in Theodosius: the ability for such a struggle in S. Ambrose of Milan.

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[5] On this section, see Gieseler's *Ch. Hist.* §§91, 92, 105 (*Smith's Am. ed.*).

[6] De Broglie well observes: "La loi civile . . . . devient moins dure mais plus austère. Elle condamne plus souvent et punit moins sévèrement." He also justly appeals to the present and past of Europe to show that Constantine's policy, with regard to slavery and such like things, was wiser than would have been a course of more sudden and sweeping reformation.

This famous prelate,[7] whose election has been already noticed,[8] was of a family that stood among the foremost in worldly rank, while it was further graced, in a way that the Saint esteemed more highly, by the spiritual nobility of martyrdom. His childhood, it is said, gave tokens of future greatness. A swarm of bees once alighted upon his lips, and, going in and out his mouth, soared thence into the sky, till they became invisible. At another time he played Bishop in his family, showing his sense of the dignity of the office by holding out his hand for his devout sister to kiss. It was an omen still more striking, and creditable to the character of the Episcopate in those days, that when he was appointed Governor of Liguria, Probus, who conveyed to him the orders of the Emperor, dismissed him with the words: "Go and govern, not as a magistrate or judge, but rather as a Bishop."

*Ambrose of Milan.*

His sense of the high character of the Episcopate accorded with this charge. Preparing himself for its duties by prayer and fasting and study of God's Word, he asked,[9] "not the glory of Apostles, not the grace of Prophets, not the virtue of Evangelists, not the circumspection of Pastors, but that which S. Paul places last, the painstaking diligence of a learner and a teacher; for he who teaches faithfully is in the best way of learning." The prayer was granted. In his case, as in that of S. Cyprian and others suddenly called to the Bishopric from the midst of worldly cares, nothing is more wonderful than the rapidity with which, amid the duties of an office that pressed him night and day, his mind became saturated, as it were, with the spirit and the letter of the Holy Scriptures. It was a knowledge that seemed intuitive rather than acquired. That Orient light of the Divine day-spring had but to dawn upon such a mind, to awaken all its chords to a delightful har-

*His Studies, A.D. 374.*

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[7] D. Ambros. Mediolan. *Op. Omn.* with a *Life* by Paulinus prefixed; Socrat. iv. 30; v. 11; Theod. v. 13, 17, 18; Sozom. vii. 25; Tillemont, tom. x. part 1; Cave, *Lives of the Fathers*, vol. iii.

[8] Page 483.

[9] S. Ambros. *Officiorum*, i. 1.

mony: the reading of the Word was not so much a study as a blissful inebriation.

*His public Life.*

This was the more remarkable in S. Ambrose, because, in the spirit of the true Roman man of business, he lived in the public eye: when not engaged in the sacred offices of the Sanctuary, he sat all day with open doors, his time and thoughts and sympathies at every man's disposal.

*His Influence.*

With such a leader, the orthodox cause was not long in gaining the ascendancy in Milan. Commended by saintliness of life; by practical ability long known and trusted; by an intentness upon the ends he had in view, which was not over scrupulous with regard to means; by an eloquence grave, simple, and sincere, yet occasionally florid, in which Latin good sense was illuminated with the tints of Oriental imagination; by a charity and generosity, signalized in one instance when he sold the Church plate for the ransom of Christian captives:[10] Ambrose became all-powerful with the Emperor and with the people; Auxentius, his Arian predecessor, was almost forgotten; the Divinity of the Word and of the Spirit shone out from the cloud of its temporary eclipse;[11] and, in short, Milan, like Constantinople, was recovered to the Nicene Faith.

*Hostility of Justina.*

So things continued during the reign of Gratian. Under Valentinian II., the boy successor of that prince, a counter-influence came from Justina, the Empress-mother, a bigoted leader of the Court faction, which still adhered to Arianism. Not long before the death of Gratian she had attempted to set a Bishop of her party over the Church of Sirmium; and the people in that city were favorable to her views. Ambrose interfered. With no other authority in the premises than zeal for a good cause, he repaired to the contested field; took his seat in Church upon the Episcopal

A.D. 380.

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[10] After the disastrous defeat and death of Valens by the Goths at Hadrianople.

[11] He took a leading part in the Council of Aquileia (A.D. 381), in which Palladius and other Arians were condemned.

throne; paralysed by a word[12] the ferocity of an Arian virgin who attempted to drag him thence; and, finally, overawed the assembly, and secured the ordination of a Catholic Bishop. Such things could happen only at a time when Episcopal vigor was more needed than scrupulous conformity to the canons.

*Contest with Symmachus.*

Of a less exceptionable character was the ardor with which he exploded the arguments of Symmachus, the eloquent prefect of Rome, who presented to the young Emperor an appeal from the Senate in behalf of the Vestal Virgins and for the restoration of that altar of Victory which Gratian had removed. There was a party in the Court which favored the appeal.[13] But S. Ambrose no sooner learned of the movement, than he interposed with a remonstrance addressed to Valentinian. The request, he urged, was an insult to Christianity, and altogether unreasonable. Its only excuse was zeal for demon-worship, which ought to provoke the faithful to still greater zeal for the Truth. In fine, if the Emperor should see fit to gratify the pagans in this matter, he might come to Church again, but he would find no Bishop there, or one, at all events, who would stand ready to resist him and to reject his offerings.

A.D. 384.

By appeals of this kind the attempt of Symmachus was defeated: according to an epigram[14] of the day, "Victory abandoned her adorer, and by deserting to Ambrose, showed that she loved her enemies better than her friends."

But the influence of Justina was steadily increasing in the Palace. The Court officers, chiefly Goths and Arians, were hostile to Ambrose, and more than one plot was formed to overthrow him. Among other attempts, there was a plan to spirit him away from his stronghold in Milan and send him into exile; but the scheme recoiled upon the head of its inventor. About the same time he was summoned to the Palace,[15] and it was demanded of him in full consistory that he should give up the Portian Basilica, a church in the suburbs, for the religious services of the Arians. He peremptorily refused. The courtiers tried in vain to persuade or overawe him. The people, the meanwhile, got wind of the matter; beset the Palace doors; defied the military; so that finally the original demand had to be changed into a request that Ambrose would go forth and appease the tumult. On the next day the demand was renewed, with the addition that he should yield the New Basilica, a larger church within the city walls. He answered that he had no power to give, nor the Emperor to receive it: the sovereign could not take the house of a mere citizen without leave, much less had he a right to seize the House of God. "But the Emperor," the courtiers argued, "has power unlimited, and everything is his." The Saint replied, "Let him at all events submit himself to the Lord: we render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's: to Cæsar tribute, to God the Church: Cæsar can have no right to the temple of God." "But," it was further urged, "the Court has surely a right to hold one Basilica of its own: will you deny the Emperor the liberty to go to church?" "The Court has no right," the Bishop answered, "to be joined to an adulteress: and she is an adulteress who is not the lawful spouse of Christ. It is honor enough to the Emperor to be called a son of the Church: the Emperor is within the Church, not over it."

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[12] "Unworthy as I am of the priesthood, it befits neither your sex nor your profession to lay hands upon a Bishop, however contemptible he may be." The virgin, it is said, died and was buried the next day.

[13] In this contest, it was a point on the heathen side, at a time when even Christians were not superior to the dread of omens, that the Barbarians were pressing the Empire on every side, that Roman arms were losing their prestige, that *Terminus* was retreating: that, in short, with the decline of the worship of Victory, there was acorres ponding withdrawal of her presence and power.

[14] Dicendi palmam Victoria tollit amico:
Transit ad Ambrosium, plus favet ira deæ.—*Ennodius.*

*Demands of the Court.*

A.D. 385.

*Ambrose refuses.*

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[15] S. Ambros. *Epistol.* xxi. *Serm. c. Auxent.* 29, 30, 35, 36. The answers given by S. Ambrose, on the three several occasions of this narrative, are not very clearly dated in the Epistles xx. and xxi., or in the Sermon attached to Ep. xxi.; but as they were substantially the same in each instance, I have thrown them together in the opening of the trouble.

These things occurred on the three days immediately preceding Holy Week. The Palm Sunday that followed was a great day in Milan; and the excitement continued, with frequent messages between the Palace and the Church, until the ensuing Thursday.[16] Ambrose was in the Old Church all day—retiring to his own house by night, that the Emperor might seize him, if he pleased—weeping, praying, expounding the Psalms and Lessons, following step by step the wondrous drama of that week as recorded in the Gospels and noted in the Church services, drawing comfort from the examples of Jonah and of Job, as they came up in the regular Lessons, and denouncing the evil spirit of Job's wife, Herodias, Jezebel and others of Eve's daughters. Occasionally he sighed, as he received (like Job) the tidings of new evils, or heard sounds of a swelling tumult from the direction of the New Church. But the flock immediately under his eye was quiet and confident. They had adopted as their watchword, "We pray, but do not fight; we pray, but are not afraid!" The Bishop, in like manner, was determined to keep still. When told that an Arian priest had fallen into the hands of the Catholics, he sent some of his Clergy to the rescue; but to all entreaties that he would go forth himself he turned a deaf ear: "Even Christ," he declared, "would not give Himself to the people, lest they should make Him a king." So again: "It is for me *not to excite* the people, to calm them is in the hand of God." And so again, addressing himself to some of the Gothic officers of the Court, "Is it for this the Roman soil received you, that you should become disturbers of the public peace?" Such was the state of things in the Old Church.

*The Contest for the Basilicas.*

*Scene in the Old Church.*

About the New Basilica the danger of a tumult was most imminent, especially on Wednesday. A veil had been put up at the door, sequestrating the building to the service of the Emperor. The citizens had been forbidden to leave their houses; the more prominent among them had been cast into prison and mulcted with heavy fines: a hardship felt

*The New Church.*

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[16] S. Ambros. *Epist.* xx. *ad Marcellin. Soror.*

the more keenly because in the Holy Week it was customary to release all debtors. Still the Catholic crowd swarmed in overflowing numbers through the streets, and filled the Basilica to its utmost capacity. It needed but a leader to bring on a riot, perhaps a revolution. A band of children tore the imperial veil. The military stood about, undecided what to do, or even fraternizing with the people. Soon a rumor went abroad that the Bishop had given orders to excommunicate them: many of them, in consequence, hurried off to the Old Basilica and made their submission.

*The Soldiers submit.*

This gave a new turn to the exhortations of S. Ambrose and to the Psalm for the day. "*O God! the heathen have come into Thine inheritance*—you heard it, brethren, in this morning's service, and you responded in bitterness of soul. *The heathen have come:* aye, more than the heathen! The Goths have come, and men of diverse nations have come: with arms have they come and poured into the Sanctuary and seized it. So we thought in our unwisdom, and in our ignorance of God's counsel we sorely grieved about it. But O the depths of the oracles of the Spirit! The heathen have come, but *into Thine inheritance* have they come. They have come heathen, but they have become Christian men. They came to wrest the heritage from us, but they have stayed to be co-heirs. Our enemies are our defenders, our adversaries are our allies. God hath made peace in His place: He hath broken the horns of the bows, the shield, the sword, and the battle!"

*The Psalm for the day.*

*The Court yields.*

Through Wednesday night the Saint remained in church, finding it impossible to make his way out without violence: but on Thursday the Court capitulated and a truce was effected. The soldiers were withdrawn from the Basilica: the citizens who had been seized were released, and the fines imposed upon them were remitted. But amid the general rejoicing, Calligonus, the captain of the guard, still ventured to mutter to S. Ambrose, "If you despise Valentinian, I will take off your head:" to which the Saint replied, "You will act like a eunuch, and I will suffer like a Bishop."

The contest was renewed the next year[17] under the auspices of an Arian prelate, who, having in some way brought his name into ill repute, had changed it from Mercurinus to Auxentius, without, however, any change for the better in his character: as S. Ambrose said, "he had put off wolf and had put on wolf, and if he had changed his name a third time it would have meant wolf still." This time the Portian Basilica was seized, and the Bishop was commanded to leave the city. He would have felt it his duty to obey, had he not known that the object of the Court was merely to get rid of him that they might rob the church. Besides which, he felt a tender solicitude for the soul of the young Emperor. The prince should not incur the guilt of Ahab so long as a faithful Naboth was alive to prevent it. Night and day, then, the church, crowded with a dense mass of people, barred against all intruders, and hemmed in by the military, resounded with psalms and hymns[18] and spiritual songs: for the opportunity was seized to institute vigils, after the manner of S. Basil in the East, and to imitate the Oriental style of antiphonal[19] chanting. Among those who watched with interest the progress of this struggle, was one great soul, just escaping at that time from the meshes of error, the future S. Augustine. Among the vigil-keepers was another great soul, S Monica, the mother of Augustine. The strife was several days prolonged, but the Court at length had to yield. It contributed to this result, that, the Ambrosian Church being dedicated at this period, and the Bishop desiring to sanctify the altar by placing under it the body of some saint, the remains of two martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius, were opportunely discovered; and a blind man, having touched the relics, was restored to sight.[20] The miracle was bruited abroad

*Contest renewed,* A.D. 386.

*Services in the Church.*

*Relics of the Martyrs.*

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[17] S. Ambros. *Epistol.* xxi. xxii.; *Orat. c. Auxent.*; S. Augustin. *Confess.* ix. 15, 16; Paulin. *Ambros. Vita.*

[18] S. Ambrose himself composed hymns for the occasion.

[19] The example was soon followed (says Paulinus) throughout the West.

[20] The miracle rests on the very explicit testimony of S. Ambrose, and S

through the city, and enthusiasm ran so high as to sweep away the faint remains of Arian opposition.

*Theodosius in Milan,* A.D. 388.

While these things were going on, the power of Maximus the Gallic tyrant was steadily growing in the West: so that after some attempts at negotiation, Valentinian fled to Thessalonica and placed himself under the protection of the great Theodosius. War ensued; Maximus was defeated; Theodosius came to Milan. When he entered the church to give thanks for his victory, he stood, as emperors in the East were accustomed to do, within that part of the sacred building reserved to the Clergy.[21] S. Ambrose sent his Deacon and required him to withdraw. The Emperor took the rebuke in admirable temper, and thanked the Bishop for teaching him that "though purple might make an emperor, it could not make a priest."

*Case of the Synagogue.*

It was not long before occasions arose for other lessons, one of which, it must be confessed, was of a very questionable character. The Christians of Callinicus had burned a Jewish synagogue, by the order of their Bishop.[22] Theodosius very properly commanded the Bishop to rebuild it. But when S. Ambrose heard of the order he was thrown into "such a heat as he had never known before": he could not look at the matter from a political point of view; he saw in it only a commander giving aid and comfort to the enemy—a brave soldier punished for burning the enemy's magazines. To be silent

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Augustine; also on that of Paulinus, the biographer of S. Ambrose. S. Ambros. *Epistol.* xxii.; *Serm. de invent. Corp. SS. G. et Protas.;* S. Augustin. *Confess.* ix. 16; *Serm.* 318, 286; *De Civit. Dei*, xxii. 8.

[21] This incident Theodoret places later; but it seems to come more naturally in connection with the first arrival of Theodosius.

[22] S. Ambrose (Ep. xl.) seems to think it possible that the Bishop might *not* have ordered it: for though he had *confessed* to the fact, his confession might have been "the blessed lie" of a man inculpating himself, to shield others or to obtain the crown of martyrdom. *Consequently*, the Emperor was much to blame for putting so strong a temptation in the way of a Bishop. This Epistle is altogether a most remarkable specimen of the sophistry of passion.

under such circumstances was to incur the guilt of "sacrilege:" it was to endanger the Emperor's salvation; it was to give people ground for believing that there was no Bishop in Milan, or one, at all events, who dared not do his duty. Seeing things in this light, Ambrose wrote to Theodosius, charitably hoping (at the end of his letter) that he might not be obliged to speak openly in Church. In this hope he was disappointed. So he finally felt obliged to preach at the great monarch; and when preaching failed, he refused to proceed with the service unless the Emperor would give his word to recall the obnoxious order. Theodosius yielded, and the burner of the synagogue went unpunished.

*The Emperor yields.*

The Saint was not so successful when he tried to stay the Emperor's rage[23] against the wicked populace of Thessalonica. The crime of that people was certainly atrocious. For no better cause than a refusal, on the part of Botheric the commander of the forces in Illyricum, to release a certain pet of the race-course, a notorious charioteer imprisoned for a crime of the most infamous description, a bloody tumult had occurred in which the commander and several officers had been barbarously murdered. The Emperor was angry enough to dissemble his anger; he seemed to yield to the entreaties of the Bishop: but through the influence of other counsellors, and possibly from a feeling of pique at the frequency of episcopal interference,[24] orders were issued secretly that seven thousand of the Thessalonicans should atone in their blood the crime of the populace. Second thoughts led to a countermand of the edict, but it came too late. Three hours the sword raged in the circus of the doomed city, and the tale of victims was complete. When S. Ambrose

*Outrage at Thessalonica,* A.D. 390.

*The Emperor's Revenge.*

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[23] The Emperor's heat of temper, with his readiness, nevertheless, to listen to reason, had been recently shown (A.D. 387) in connection with a sedition at Antioch. See Theod. v. 19, 20.

[24] In his letter on this subject, S. Ambrose alludes to the impression that he *knew too much* about affairs in the Palace, and apologizes for it *Epistol.* li.

heard the fearful news, there was no such "heat" as in the synagogue transaction: it was rather a sickening and sinking of the soul. He could not bear to see the Emperor's face. Pleading illness, he retired into the country, and wrote thence an epistle, sober, quiet, affectionate, tenderly reproachful, and mildly apologetic, a model of that tact which only true feeling can inspire.[25] But in all its "meekness of wisdom" there was no concealment of its meaning. The Emperor had sinned like David: like David he must repent. The devil had begrudged him the crowning grace of clemency, and had plucked it from him: he must recover it at once in the only way permitted. "For my part," the Saint added, "I have no reproach to make. I am not angry, I am only afraid. I *dare* not offer the Sacrifice if you assist at it. . . . . The Lord Himself hath expressly forbidden it. The very night when I was preparing to leave the city, pressed with anxious cares, I saw you in a vision coming to the Church, and no power was left me to proceed with the sacred service."

*Letter of Ambrose to Theodosius.*

In spite of the warning the Emperor went to Church.[26] The Bishop met him at the gate, took hold of his purple robe, and said, in the hearing of all the people, "Stand back! How dare you lift up in prayer hands steeped in the blood of innocents? How receive in such hands the most sacred Body of our Lord? How carry His precious Blood to a mouth whence issued the word of fury? Depart and repent. Submit to the bonds of discipline: the bonds which alone can restore you to health." Theodosius submitted. Eight months after, when Christmas-tide approached, he shut himself up in his palace, mourned bitterly, and shed floods of tears. "The House of God is open to slaves and beggars: but to me the Church is closed, and so are the gates of Heaven!" At last "indulgence" was accorded to his prayers, the sincerity of his repentance being proved by an edict, equally

*Penance of Theodosius.*

*His Restoration.*

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[25] The contrast between this and the Synagogue Epistle is very striking. *Ep.* li.

[26] Theod. v. 18; Sozom. vii. 25.

honorable to himself and to the prelate who required it, that there should be thenceforward an interval of thirty days between every sentence of death and its final confirmation. On this condition he was released from his bonds and allowed to enter the sacred place.

*Triumph of the Church.*

Under such a sovereign, instructed by such a pastor, the triumph of Christianity could not be delayed much longer: heathenism rapidly retired from its high places in the cities, and became, in the strict sense of the word, a "pagan" superstition.

*Severity against Pagans, A.D. 391-394.*

*The Serapeum.*

Even the Senate began to give way, and wherever their hearts might be,[27] their "feet," at all events, had to "follow the opinion of the Emperor." Severe edicts went forth against all forms of idolatry. Symmachus again pleaded in vain for the Vestals, the priests, and for discarded Victory. Not only were the expenses of sacrifices no longer defrayed out of the public treasury, but the heathen were even forbidden to go near the temples. It had been well had the same prohibition been extended to Christians; but as it was not, zeal against idolatry began to run riot, and disgraceful scenes of violence were of frequent occurrence. The great temple of Serapis, upon the immunity of which the very existence of the world was thought to depend,[28] thus perished in Alexandria: but earth and sky were not shaken by its fall, nor even was the Nile stayed from its accustomed overflow; on the contrary, as the crowd stood around in trembling expectation, a swarm of rats ran from the shattered image of the god, and the superstition[29] was exploded in a peal of laughter. By events of this kind the confidence of the Christians and the dismay of the heathen were wonderfully increased.

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[27] "Qua vocat egregii sententia principis, illuc
Libera tum pedibus tum corde frequentia transit."

Prudent. *in Symmach.* i. 699, ss. The same Senate, however, decreed the customary divine honors to Theodosius, upon his death.

[28] Theod. v. 22; Socrat. v. 16.

[29] Even Christians found it hard to shake off these heathen superstitions. Thus, S. Ambrose, on one occasion, heard the mass of his flock shouting at the moon, to help her through the travail of an eclipse. *Serm. de Defectione Lunæ.*

*Rhetorical Avengers.*

Still the shrines of the old gods had at least their rhetorical avengers. Those busy iconoclasts, "the black-robed tribe (of monks) whose elaborately pale faces concealed an elephantine capacity for meat and drink," were made the targets of the wit of the eloquent Libanius.[30] The priests were not as zealous as the orators. When they saw the temples ruined, "they had no choice," says the same Libanius, "but either to be silent or to die." None of them adopted the latter alternative: so that the fall of heathenism, while it was attended with circumstances discreditable to Christianity, evoked no instances of heroism honorable to itself.

*Struggle long continued.*

The death-struggle was prolonged, going on from place to place, with frequent edicts from the Emperors,[31] and with riots now from the pagan side and now from the Christian, through the whole of the next century: a struggle in which charges of falsehood, wrong, and violence were used by either party with almost equal truth.[32] Under Arcadius and Honorius many temples escaped destruction by being appropriated to State uses. Some, such as the Pantheon in Rome, were converted into churches. It was not till towards the middle of the sixth century, under Justinian I., that paganism was driven from its stronghold among men of letters by the abolition of the New Platonic School at Athens, while an edict of the same Emperor required all heathen to be baptized.

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[30] He wrote a vigorous defence of the temples, addressed to Theodosius, in which the monks are severely lashed—unhappily with too much justice, so far as some of them were concerned.

[31] See Gieseler's *Ch. H.* § 79.

[32] S. Augustine makes a heathen say, "Why should I turn Christian? I have suffered wrong from a Christian and have not done wrong: a Christian has sworn falsely to me, but I to him never." So S. Chrysostom: "Not a heathen would be left, if we were really Christians: but now there are no converts," etc.

# BOOK V.

## FROM THE RISE OF NESTORIANISM
## TO THE
## CLOSE OF THE TRULLAN COUNCIL.

A.D. 428–691.

# Book V.

## CHAPTER I.

### NESTORIUS AND S. CYRIL.

*Nestorius Bishop,* A.D. 428.

On the death of Sisinnius, the fourth in succession from S. Chrysostom, the See of Constantinople was hotly contested: some rallied around Proclus, a learned and saintly Bishop, the titular Metropolitan of Cyzicum,[1] others around Philip, a distinguished Presbyter of the city. Through the influence of the Court both candidates were dropped; and Nestorius, a Presbyter of Antioch, a second Chrysostom (it was thought) in eloquence and devotion, was duly elected. He was a monk, a man of severe life, a ready extemporaneous speaker, a controversialist of great renown, a disciple of the rationalizing school of Theodorus of Mopsuestia. That he was not deficient in the pride of orthodoxy was shown by his first speech to Theodosius after his consecration. "Give me, O Emperor," he exclaimed, "a world purged of heresy, and I will bestow on you the Kingdom of Heaven: assist me in putting down the sects, and I will help you to conquer the Persians."

Five days after, he proved his zeal by conducting an assault upon a Church of the Arians: which happening to take fire during the process of demolition, the crowd greeted their new chief with the ominous title of *Incendiary.* With equal animosity he attacked the Novatians, Macedonians, Pelagians, and at a later time the opponents of the Pelagians, under the name of Manichæans. Acts of this kind were not unpopular.[2] In times of general weakness, violence in word or deed passes current for strength. Nestorius, by his excesses, may have offended a few: but the multitude applauded his zeal; the Court helped him on with intolerant edicts; and even the heretics whom he harassed were not alienated,[3] for "many of them at that time came over to the Catholic Faith."

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[1] Socrat. vii. 28.

*His Zeal against Heretics.*

The case was different when, within six months after his consecration, he began to assail imagined errors within the Church:[4] when, as Socrates says, he converted an innocent phrase into "a bugbear," and instituted what was virtually a new test of heresy.

*A new Quarrel.*

Anastasius, an Antiochean Presbyter and an intimate friend of Nestorius, asserted, in a public discourse, that *the Blessed Virgin ought not to be called Theotókos, or Mother of God: such a title implying,* as he urged, *that Deity could be born of Humanity.* The objection was a new one, and was vehemently resented. Every one was accustomed to the title: no one had ever thought of attaching to it a meaning so manifestly absurd. The preacher, therefore, was silenced by the clamor of the people. Dorotheus, a Bishop, another friend of Nestorius, came to his relief. "*If any man,*" he cried, "*call Mary Theotókos, let him be anathema.*" Nestorius

*Denial of the Title Theotokos.*

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[2] Socrates speaks of them as offensive to those "who did not cherish a senseless antipathy to the very name of heretic"—that is, to a minority. Socrat. vii. 29.

[3] Socrat. vii. 31.

[4] Socrat. vii. 29, 31–34; Evagrius, i. 1–7; for documents, etc., see Mansi, iv. v. and Hardouin. i.; Marii. Mercator. *Opp.* Ed. Garnier; Neale's *Holy Eastern Church,* vol. i; Gieseler, § 88.

sat by and held his peace: but no one doubted that the new issue was opened at his suggestion.

All this occurred on the twenty-second of November. Christmas was nigh at hand, the great Feast of the Nativity: the time intervening was felt to be the lull which precedes a storm, and the feeling spread rapidly to all parts of the Church. Nestorius, it afterwards appeared, was preparing for battle. Cyril of Alexandria, the destined antagonist of Nestorius, was at work on his annual Paschal Epistle, now nearly due, for which no subject could be more proper than the question just started: he wrote, therefore, on the Doctrine of the Incarnation, setting forth the Faith as commonly held, and guarding it, so far as possible, against the danger of misapprehensions.

*Preparing for Battle, Nov.* 22, 428.

The Son of God, he urged, *did not come to man* merely, or take man upon him as a garment that may be put on and off: He verily became man; He made man *His own;* He showed Himself in the world as being one of us; the Flesh in which He was manifest was truly *His* Flesh; so that whatever was done or suffered in that Flesh, the Son of God did, the Son of God suffered—*without*, however, *any suffering or change in His Divine and ineffable Nature.* Hence there could be no harm in saying, Mary bore Christ, or *Mary bore God;* nay, there could be no harm in saying, even, *God increased in wisdom and stature:*[5] for though God in His proper nature is incapable of birth or of increase, yet by His eternal purpose of assuming man's nature He made Himself in some sort capable of both. In short, Christ is one and the same Divine Being, whether we call Him *Jesus* or the *Word*, *Emmanuel* or *God.* To *divide*[6] Him in any way, to imagine a man Jesus merely joined to the Divine Word and distinguishable

*Cyril's Paschal for the year* 429.

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[5] Cyril's reasoning on this point is more bold than clear. *Ep. Paschal.* xvii.

[6] This refers to the *then* received reading of 1 John, iv. 3—"every spirit ὁ λύει, which *divideth*, Jesus Christ." See Socrat. vii. 32.

from Him, were to attribute to that man a chief share in the work of grace which the Son of God wrought ;[7] it were to make that man the Offering, that man the Priest ; it were to make that man the worthy object of Divine adoration ; it were to substitute, in short, a human for a Divine Atonement.

*Sagacity of S. Cyril.*

So, in substance, Cyril wrote, with great courage in facing the real difficulties of the question, with remarkable forethought of issues impending from opposite directions, and with the least possible allusion to the troubles which were brewing in Constantinople.

*Three Sermons of Nestorius.*

On the other hand, Nestorius had armed himself with three discourses which were delivered respectively on Christmas, New Year's Day, and the Feast of the Epiphany.

*His Doctrine.*

To use the term Theotókos, he urged, was to imitate the heathen, who had mothers for their gods ; it was to contradict S. Paul, who testified of Christ that He was "without father, without mother, without descent" ; it was to lose sight of the distinction, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" : to avoid such consequences, we should believe the Son of Mary to be a *temple* wherein God dwelt, a *vestment* wherewith He was clothed ; in short, not God, but *Theodóchos*, *Theophórus*, one inhabited by God, yet entitled to adoration, by reason of the veiled Deity who dwelt within.[8]

*His Evasions.*

On this last point, the propriety of *worshipping Christ as One, on account of the intimate connection of the two natures*, the difference between Nestorius and S. Cyril might seem almost to have vanished in a mist of words. There remained, however, the fierce hostility to the term *Theotókos* as a title of the Virgin, and the studied application to Christ of such words as *Theophóros*—words which expressed only a Divine indwelling. All this looked suspicious, to say the least. Moreover, Nestorius was not content to act on the defensive: he anathematized his opponents, he called them Apollinarians. Hence a great stir in Constantinople. First a certain monk refused to commune with the Bishop: he was scourged and driven into exile. Then a layman named Eusebius, afterwards Bishop of Dorylæum, showed in a brief tract that the new doctrine was but a revival of the heresy of Paul of Samosata. Marius Mercator, a Latin residing in the city, and a well-known opponent of the Pelagian heresy, took and maintained a similar ground. Some of the Clergy followed their example: though with the Court and Patriarch against them, they could utter their sentiments only at great risks. It was not so easy to silence the Monks: and the violent acts of Nestorius, which under different circumstances might have provoked little comment, now appeared in their true shape as acts of tyranny.

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[7] The logical connection between the Nestorian and Pelagian heresies was seen by S. Cyril, and by most theologians, at a glance.

[8] The chief sentences of Nestorius are given in Gieseler's notes, § 88.

*General Excitement.*

At the Feast of the Incarnation, the twenty-fifth of March, Proclus preached in the great Church, in presence of Nestorius: his subject, of course, was the Virgin Theotókos, that bush which burned with fire but was not consumed, that Mother and Maid who embraced Him whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain. It was a sermon rich in Oriental imagery, richer still in theologic lore. Nestorius answered it extemporaneously, and followed up his strictures afterwards with several more studied replies. No new point was made, beyond a vehement assertion that by "the Apostle and High Priest of our Profession" we are to understand the *man* Jesus, not the everlasting Word. There was much bitterness, in these discourses, against the "generation of vipers" who refused to hear them: much of a fierce determination to maintain at all hazards the unpopular issue. They were widely and industriously circulated. Wherever they went they carried strife with them. At last, coming into the hands of the Egyptian monks, they furnished S. Cyril a reason, or as some say a pretext, for taking an active part in the growing quarrel.

*Sermon of Proclus.*

*Answers of Nestorius.*

*About the end of April.*

This remarkable man, who holds a place hardly second to that of S. Athanasius in the History of Dogma, rests under no little obloquy, from certain events connected with the beginning[9] of his career.

*Cyril's early Career.*

He was the nephew of Theophilus. He resembled that violent prelate in natural heat of temper. Entering the Ministry, moreover, under his auspices, he fell heir to his prejudices and to his general policy. A monastic training of six years under the severe Hilarion was not likely to improve him in these respects. To crown all, his election to the Episcopate was carried by the people in the face of a decided opposition from the military and civil authorities. It were hard to imagine a more trying position: an age, hopelessly corrupt; a city, turbulent beyond all others; a Church, powerful, but still entangled in the meshes of old feuds; a magistracy feeble at the best for the maintenance of order, but now jealous of the Bishop, in league with his enemies, exercising authority in the spirit of a faction rather than of legitimate and acknowledged rule. Under such circumstances, Cyril, it is said, *enlarged the sway inherited from Theophilus, and seriously encroached upon the temporal power.* This may have been the effect of ambition on his part. But as the same thing happened at the same period with many other prelates, it seems more just to regard it as a necessity of the times. When the rod of the magistrate passes into priestly hands, it is generally by a process of at least three steps. First, it is dropped by the hands that ought to hold it; then, falling upon the

*Trying Position.*

*Usurpation of Civil Power.*

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[9] Socrates, our only authority for this part of S. Cyril's life, evidently writes under a threefold bias. As a Constantinopolitan he had no liking for the Alexandrian; as partial to the Novatians, he was unfriendly to a Bishop who suppressed that sect; as a cold-blooded man of liberal views, he felt an antipathy for the zealous defender of the Faith. He shows his bias chiefly in two particulars. *First,* he mentions Cyril *only* in matters prejudicial to his fame; *secondly*, he omits such circumstances as might explain or justify Cyril's conduct. Notwithstanding all this, I give *the facts* as Socrates relates them, merely adding here and there what he omits. Soc. *E. H.* vii. 7, 13–15.

ground, it becomes a serpent; finally, it is seized by whatever hand seems at the time most capable. Such, it is reasonable to suppose, was the nature of Cyril's usurpations.

*His Excesses,* A.D. 412.

On his accession he was ambitious, as rulers new to power are apt to be, to pick up and enforce neglected laws. Edicts against the sects were precisely of that character. Most prelates began by an attempt to enforce them, few were so unwise as to persist in the effort. Cyril, like the rest, made a vigorous start:[10] he suppressed the worship of the Novatians, seized their Church property, and confiscated the goods of their Bishop Theopemptus.

*Quarrel with Orestes,* A.D. 415.

He next comes before us in a bitter contest with the Jews of Alexandria and with Orestes the Prefect. The Jews, it appears, infuriated against the Christians about some quarrel connected with the *mimes* or *dancers*, had assembled in the theatre on a certain Sabbath; and Orestes had met them there, to put forth a new *polity*, or order, for the better regulation of the shows. A few Christians looked in to learn the nature of the order. One of them, Hierax, a schoolmaster, an ardent admirer of the Bishop, was detected, seized as a spy, dragged before the Prefect, and in compliance with the outcry of the Jews, was forthwith put to the torture. From a ruler thus indulgent to the humors of a mob, little could be hoped for in the way of justice: Cyril contented himself, therefore, with an appeal to the leading men of the hostile sect, warning them of the danger they incurred, if they went on provoking the anger of the Christians. The warning, or threat, was of no avail. The Jews, confident of impunity, added plot to plot, and at length resorted to an attempt of the most atrocious character. Having agreed that each should wear a ring of the white bark of a palm-branch for mutual recognition, they posted themselves in

*Massacre of the Christians. Expulsion of the Jews.*

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[10] Bingham justly censures the *invidious* way in which Socrates tells this story: viz., that he mentions the rigid acts of Cyril without alluding to the law—an edict of Arcadius and Honorius—under which he acted. *Ch. Antiquit.* V. iv. 11.

the streets at the dead of night, raised a cry that Alexander's church was on fire, and slew the Christians one by one as they rushed out to the rescue. The carnage continued till daybreak, when the Christians rallied, with the Bishop at their head, drove back the murderers, took their synagogues by storm, sacked their quarters, and finally succeeded in expelling them in a body from the city.

Where Orestes was during this *mêlée*, nowhere appears. We only learn that he was grieved at the loss to the city of so many wealthy Jews, and that he wrote to the Emperor, complaining of the Christians. Cyril also wrote, complaining of the Jews. In the meantime, the people were urgent for a reconciliation between the Prefect and the Bishop. So long as they were at variance, the majority of the citizens were virtually outlaws, and no man was secure of life or limb. Cyril was not slow to make suitable advances. He sent messengers of peace to the irritated governor; and when these were rejected, without even the scant courtesy of a hearing, the Bishop went to him in person, holding the Gospels out before him, as an olive-branch. The Prefect would have nothing to do with him, and the situation of the Christians became more desperate.

*Efforts for Peace.*

Under these circumstances, the Nitrian Monks, men whose burning zeal was tempered with the least amount possible of practical discretion, saw fit to interfere in behalf of their spiritual head. Five hundred of them came in from the desert, and meeting Orestes in his chariot, surrounded by his guards, expostulated with him in monkish fashion. It is likely that he was not more civil to them than he had been to the Bishop: at all events, they soon came to rough words, calling him pagan, idolater, and other hard names. Thoroughly frightened, the Prefect protested that he was a Christian. The Nitrians gave little heed to his protestations; and one of them, named Ammonius, threw a stone at him and wounded him in the head. The guards take to flight, as seems to have been their custom in cases of emergency: but the citizens run up,

*Riot of the Monks.*

the monks in turn are routed,[11] and Ammonius is seized, scourged and tortured till death comes to his relief. Having made sure of him, Orestes, as usual, wrote a letter of complaint to the Court. Cyril sent in a statement for the opposite side. He even went so far, in anger at the Prefect or in pity of the monk, as to eulogize Ammonius in a public discourse; calling him *Thaumasios*, the *Admirable*, and entering his name upon the Roll of the Martyrs. For this he was much blamed by the more sober sort; and the Bishop himself, when he had thought better of it, was glad to let the matter be buried in oblivion.

*Ammonius called a Martyr.*

So far, in this eventful story, there seems to be a strange reversal of the ordinary relations of human society: the priest changes characters with the prefect, the monk with the soldier, the sheep with the shepherd: as the drama draws to a close, a new phenomenon appears, in the shape of a fair young woman, who with marvellous dignity and propriety assumes and sustains the part commonly appropriated to wrinkled men.

*Strange Reversals.*

Hypatia, the famous daughter of Cleon the mathematician, a virgin,[12] a beauty, a scholar, a sage, a political oracle, an accomplished lecturer, was the acknowledged head in Alexandria of that school of philosophy which was the pride of paganism and the most formidable antagonist of Christianity. She was the flower of the tree which Plotinus had planted and Porphyrius watered. As such she could not but be unpopular with the mass of Christians. She was extremely

*Hypatia.*

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[11] The terrific character which grandiloquent writers have given these monks seems to have been appreciated only by *Orestes and the guards*: citizens were not so much afraid of them.

[12] It is so much the custom to mention only the praises of Hypatia, that I almost shrink from putting in a word of qualification. It is due to truth, however, to remark that *the facts* of her story, as related by Damascius (*apud Suidam*), reveal a woman who could *unsex* herself in a most revolting manner. Modern delicacy, therefore—*e. g.*, the *Biographie Universelle*—is content to eulogize her for repelling too ardent lovers: to say *how* she did it is tolerable only in Greek.

intimate, moreover, with the Prefect Orestes. As such she was vehemently suspected, perhaps unjustly, of fomenting that petulant and sulky mood which had kept the city so long in a fever of excitement. In a morbid condition of the public mind, suspicion is more irritating than proven guilt. The feeling against Hypatia soon fretted into a frenzy. A number of fanatics, perhaps the *Parabolani*,[13] those *desperadoes* of charity in the early Church, men who devoted themselves to familiarity with suffering in its ghastliest forms, felt a call to remove the fair obstacle to peace and unity. Headed by one Peter, a Reader, they met Hypatia in the street, tore her from her carriage, dragged her to a church hard by, stripped her, cut up her body with sharp shells, and finally burnt her mangled limbs in a place called Cinaron. The fiendish act brought no little reproach upon the Church and upon the Bishop. Even the Court was moved by it to adopt some measures for the public security: as the rankness of the Parabolani manifestly required weeding, their order was reduced by a special edict to the number of five hundred.

*Suspicions against her.*

*Her Cruel Fate.*

There is no proof whatever that the Bishop was responsible,[14] by word or deed, for the fate of Hypatia: still the catastrophe was a lesson that a wise man, in his position, would lay to heart. How Cyril took it we have no means of knowing. We find, however, that the next ten years of his life were comparatively quiet. It is also on record, that during this time he abandoned one strong prejudice inherited from his uncle, and allowed the name of S. Chrysostom to be

*Fourteen Years of Quiet.*

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[13] The name is synonymous with *Parabolarii*—desperadoes—a name of reproach given to the Christians on account of their eagerness for martyrdom. Bingham's *Antiquities*, III. ix. 1. The *Parabolani* probably date from the great plague, A.D. 263, in that enthusiastic care for the dead and dying which is described by Dionysius, *ap. Euseb.* vii. 22. Like all societies which originate in a particular necessity, they degenerated when the necessity had passed away, and became a dangerous, though still useful, faction. See Tillemont, *S. Cyrille*, art. iv.

[14] Damascius, however, charges him with jealousy of Hypatia's popularity as a lecturer. Suidæ *Lexicon*.

inserted in the diptychs. This was done, to be sure, on the urgent remonstrances of the other Bishops: but in cases of this kind, involving the surrender of a cherished feeling, it shows greater humility to yield to one's peers than to act upon the dictates of private reason.

*Character of S. Cyril.*

Such, then, was the man who came forward, or was put forward, rather, by his eminent position in the Hierarchy, as the champion of the doctrine of the Incarnation. He was a man of strong will, precipitate, zealous, not unlike Nestorius in the more obvious traits of his character. In one point, however, there seems to have been a difference of the first importance. Cyril, though impetuous by nature, was not incapable of second and better thoughts. He could learn from experience, he was patient of rebuke. S. Isidore of Pelusium, his austere monitor, rebuked his "pride" in the matter of S. Chrysostom, with a plainness of speech which would have set most men frantic. Afterwards, again, in the Nestorian quarrel, he smote him sharply on the one cheek for his excess of zeal, and still more sharply on the other for his moderation.[15] The grace to take such reproofs and profit by them, is often that which makes the difference between the heretic and the saint, between Cyril and Nestorius. As a theologian, Cyril won a high place in general esteem. More than any other man of his day, he seized instinctively, and inflexibly maintained, that narrow middle way which is the path of safety. How far he merited the name of *Saint*, which the Church East and West has accorded to him, we at the present day have slender means of judging; for we know nothing of the tenor of his daily life: history reveals him to us only as he appeared amid scenes of strife—scenes in which, so far as appearances go, the best men often seem to differ little from the worst.

*S. Isidore, his Monitor.*

The Nestorian controversy, it has been mentioned, had enkindled the zeal of the monks in Egypt: to them the first Letter of Cyril was addressed. An answer to it came from a friend of Nestorius in Constantinople. Efforts being made, the meanwhile, to prejudice the Emperor against Cyril, and numerous inquiries coming to the latter from Celestine of Rome and other prominent Bishops, with not a few complaints of his inertness, he at length addressed a sharp letter to Nestorius himself, and received a brief and cool and contemptuous reply.

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[15] It is unfair, in modern writers, to cite these rebukes as evidence against S. Cyril. Holy men are thrifty of their censures: they bestow them, not where they are most deserved, but where they are most likely to be heeded.

*Cyril and Nestorius, April.* A.D. 429.

To Celestine Nestorius wrote somewhat more at length, putting the best face upon his new opinions.[16] The letter came under the eye of the famous Leo, then Archdeacon, afterwards known as Leo the Great, and by his advice was handed over to Cassian, to be translated into Latin and refuted. The result was an able tract, which appeared not long after, on the Doctrine of the Incarnation.

*Nestorius and Celestine.*

A second letter from Cyril to Nestorius elicited a reply, in which the Union of the two Natures in One Person might seem to have been almost admitted: there was no retractation, however, and terms were shuffled in a way which left room to doubt the sincerity of the author's meaning. Nestorius also wrote once more to Rome. As usual in such questions, innumerable epistles were passing to and fro, in every direction. Finally, Cyril, having held the meanwhile a Council at Alexandria, sent a special messenger to Celestine, with a declaration of faith on the part of the Council, and a careful statement of the heads of heresy supposed to be held by Nestorius.

*Letters to the Roman Church,* A.D. 430.

A Council met at Rome, with these documents before it, and with elaborate memorials from other quarters. Nestorius was condemned. To Cyril it was entrusted to carry out the sentence, and after due warning, with sufficient time allowed for retractation, to take the necessary steps for making it final. That nothing might be done immaturely, letters were sent at the same time to Nestorius, John of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, and other leading Bishops.

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[16] For the order of events and the dates—which in this controversy are of great importance—I refer the reader to Neale's *Holy Eastern Church*, Book I. sect. i. Milman, in his anxiety to convict Cyril of *prejudicing* the mind of Celestine against Nestorius, is forced to admit that Nestorius wrote first, but thinks Cyril to have been *virtually* beforehand with him, from his having written in *Latin:* he forgets that the Letter of Nestorius was condemned as soon as received; that it was given to Cassian to *be refuted* as well as translated. *Lat. Christianity*, vol. i.

*Council in Rome, August,* A.D. 430.

*John of Antioch.*

*His Letter to Nestorius.*

*Answer of Nestorius.*

John of Antioch was a personal friend of Nestorius; and he acted the part of a friend, by urging him[17] affectionately to bend to the storm, and to spare the Church the scandal of a needless schism. I have "always thought," he said, "that your *meaning* accorded with that of the Fathers and Church Doctors. If so, why scruple at a word? Why expose yourself to the charge of a childish contentiousness, by battling against a term which can be used in a good sense, and which *has been* so used, or at least has been allowed, by all sound teachers? It is no shame to yield in a matter of this kind. Many have so yielded for the peace of the Church. You and I remember how it was with our blessed master Theodorus (of Mopsuestia): how he broached first to you, who had his confidence at that time, and afterwards to others, a disquieting opinion; how he repented of it when he saw that it engendered strife; how openly he recanted for the Church's sake; how, in consequence of this, he stood in higher credit than before." So, in substance, John wrote: a letter creditable to the good sense and kind feeling of the writer. The answer of Nestorius showed a heart full of the worst heresy: the pride of a morbid orthodoxy, the bigotry of self-confidence which delighted to be attacked, the determination at all hazards to brand his brethren with an absurdity—that the "Deity originated from the Virgin"—which no sane man *could* hold, and which every one disavowed. "Of all men," says he, "I thought myself the last to be charged with any departure from right belief: known, as I am, to be the foe of heresy, and to take pleasure in the thousands of assaults to which my zeal for sound doctrine has continually exposed me." He protested, however, that he had no objection to the word *Theotókos*, rightly understood. In fact, he seemed ready to sacrifice everything, except his pride: but he declared himself confident that, if a General Council were granted him, the whole matter could be settled to universal satisfaction. He relied, it is probable, on the influence of the Court.

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[17] Hardouin. i. pp. 1327–1334.

*Cyril's Twelve Anathemas, November,* A.D. 430.

Cyril executed his task with due deliberation. More than two months elapsed before he prepared, with the help of a Synod at Alexandria, the test of orthodoxy which Nestorius was to sign. It was in the shape of twelve Anathemas,[18] denying in as many forms the existence of *two Persons or Hypostases* in Christ, and affirming the *Union of the two Natures* to be *real* in such a sense, that the Flesh assumed by the Word is truly *His* Flesh, not that of another person joined on to Him. This is known as the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union.

*Twelve Counter Anathemas.*

Nestorius responded by twelve counter Anathemas, aimed partly at a supposed *confusion of the two Natures*, as when Emmanuel is called God the Word, or when Mary is called Theotókos; partly at a supposed *physical change of the Divine Substance into Flesh*,[19] as when it is said "The Word was made Flesh"; partly, against *direct adoration of Christ as God*, Nestorius allowing only a relative worship to "the servant form," on account of "its connection with the Nature of the Only-Begotten."

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[18] The word *anathema*, like the word *damn*, has been so much taken in vain, that the English reader is apt to attribute to it a harsher meaning than properly belongs to it. It means properly a thing *laid up*, or *reserved*, for the righteous judgment of God. The Church, properly speaking, judges no man: she anathematizes, *i. e.*, leaves certain things or certain men to God's judgment.

[19] The *transubstantiation* of the Divine Substance into Flesh, or of the Flesh into the Divine Substance, was of course denied by the Catholics, who referred to the analogy of the Eucharist as an illustration of the truth they maintained: as in that sacrament the bread becomes the Body, without changing its *substance* or *nature*, so, etc. See Pearson, *On the Creed*, Art. iii.

## CHAPTER II.

### COUNCIL OF EPHESUS.—SYRIAN CHRISTIANITY.

*Council called.*

WITH the consent of all parties, the Emperor called a General Council, to meet at Ephesus on the ensuing Pentecost.

*Ephesus, June, A.D. 431.*

The Council assembled. Nestorius was first on the ground with a numerous body of friends. Cyril came not long after with a train of about fifty Egyptian Bishops. Juvenal of Jerusalem arrived a few days later than the time appointed. John of Antioch was latest of all, but as he sent an excuse for his tardiness, the Council waited for him fifteen days.

*Debates in the Interim.*

The interval was spent in conferences, discussions, negotiations, intrigues. The season was hot and dry; and one or two Bishops died from fevers engendered by the heat. The debates were not more temperate than the weather. Cyril, it is said, skirmished with the enemy, harassing him by powerful reasoning and vigorous abuse. Memnon of Ephesus was even more active on the same side. On the other hand, Nestorius exasperated the strong feeling against himself, by frivolous and irreverent off-hand speeches: he would not worship, he declared, a God two months old.

*Council opened: Protests.*

Under such circumstances nothing was to be gained by delay, nothing by discussion. The Bishops had already waited fifteen days, some of them longer, but John of Antioch still failed to make his appearance. Many suspected that he intended to wear out the Council by delay. Cyril and the majority were in favor of proceeding to business at once.

Nestorius and his friends protested.[1] So did Candidianus, the Imperial Commissioner. Sixty-eight of the prelates were induced to sign the protest. In spite of all this, the majority persisted, and the Council was formally opened with an attendance of one hundred and fifty-eight Bishops.

*Nestorius Condemned.*

Nestorius was thrice summoned, and thrice refused to appear. The Creed of Nicæa was read: then letters of Cyril, Nestorius, Celestine, followed by remarks and acclamations of agreement or dissent. Next came testimony to the effect that Nestorius had not retracted his error, but, by his profane speech about a God of two months old, had rather confirmed it. Extracts from the Fathers were read, and extracts from the writings of Nestorius. Finally, sentence of deposition and excommunication was pronounced, and signed by the Bishops present. Other signatures were afterwards added, making the number in all about two hundred.

*Rival Councils.*

Such was the action of the first day's session of the Council. Five days later, John of Antioch arrived and opened a separate Synod of the friends of Nestorius. A wretched time followed: Council against Council, sentence against sentence, protest against protest. John and his party, on the one side, Cyril and Memnon on the other, were mutually deposed. The majority, however, were confirmed in the course they had taken by the arrival of Legates from Rome, who, having heard the Acts of the first session read, assented to them and subscribed the deposition of Nestorius.

*The Court interferes.*

The Court interfered: at first by a commissioner who, after a vain endeavor to bring the parties to terms, read a letter from the Emperor approving the deposition of Nestorius, Cyril, and Memnon; afterwards, these three being the meanwhile arrested, by summoning a deputation of eight from each Council, to meet the Emperor at Chalcedon.

The result took every one by surprise. Cyril hitherto had been under the ban of the Court. Nestorius, on the contrary, had been high in favor. When the final decision came, all this was reversed: whether it was that the facts of the case proved irresistible, or, as some alleged, that Alexandrian gold proved superior to the gold of Constantinople, Theodosius confirmed the decree of the first session of the Council; Nestorius was left to his fate; Maximian was elected Bishop in his stead; and Cyril returned to his see in triumph.

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[1] The haste of Cyril has been much censured: I doubt, however, whether any deliberative body could be induced to wait more than fifteen days, in hot weather, on the convenience of a dilatory and perhaps hostile member.

*The Deposition of Nestorius confirmed.*

Much soreness remained among the Bishops of the defeated party. But in the course of the next year, John of Antioch and Cyril were reconciled: the latter declaring *the Divine Word to be Impassible*—a point on which his orthodoxy had been called in question; and the former signing a Confession that "Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Son of God: perfect God, and perfect Man of a reasonable soul and of flesh subsisting: according to His Divinity, begotten of the Father before the world; according to His Humanity, born in these last days, for our Salvation, of the Virgin Mary: consubstantial with the Father, according to His Godhead, and consubstantial with us, according to His Manhood: and in that the two Natures have been united, we acknowledge one Lord, one Christ, one Son. Wherefore we confess that the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of God: because the Word of God was incarnate and was made man."

*Cyril and John reconciled,* A. D. 432.

Among those who had sided with Nestorius from a misapprehension of the views of the opposite side, Theodoret of Cyrus, who holds a high place among the Church Historians, was one of the most learned and saintly in life: he was also one of the last to forsake his error. There were others who really inclined to the heresy imputed to Cyril. These were scandalized by his moderation in his dealings with John of Antioch, and by his assertion of the two perfect Natures in Christ. S. Isidore of Pelusium was among those who blamed him for yielding too much.

*Extreme Parties.*

The fate of Nestorius was extremely sad. Banished first to a monastery, thence to Petra, and thence to the great Oasis; driven from this last shelter by the inroads of barbarous tribes; destitute, afflicted and burdened with age, he wrote a piteous letter to the Court: but receiving no answer beyond a sentence of remoter exile, he finally perished, it is said, of a painful and loathsome disease. The tongue which had offended, or, as some say, his whole body, was eaten up of worms.

*End of Nestorius.*

Very different from all this was the fortune that attended his name and doctrine. As if to verify his proud promise of helping to conquer the Persians, his system, when banished from the Empire, was hospitably received into the rival Kingdom, and established itself there with splendid success as the dominant form of religion.[2] The famous school of Edessa was the fountain-head of the error. There Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodorus of Tarsus were held in honor. There the flower of the Persian youth were instructed in the elements of Christian learning. Thence, through the violent zeal of the Catholic Bishops of the place, a host of ardent alumni, driven from the school, poured into the Eastern world and diffused everywhere their rationalistic tenets. Ibas, one of their number, wrote a celebrated letter to Maris the Persian, in which the impression was conveyed that Nestorius had been condemned without a hearing, and that Cyril and his friends were Apollinarians. The calumny spread, and effectually poisoned the mind of the East. About the same time, Barsumas of Nisibis, another disciple of the Edessan school, persuaded the Persian king that the Catholics in his dominions were but Roman spies, and that he could never be sure of the loyalty of his subjects, so long as they were one in faith with the Greeks. By arts of this kind, Nestorianism gained a firm hold in Persia.

*Spread of Nestorian Errors.*

*Persia, how gained.*

From Persia it spread, through all the intricate channels of Oriental commerce, into Arabia towards the south, back into

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[2] For the rest of this chapter see Asseman. *Bibliothec. Oriental.* tom. iii. Gibbon (chap. xlvii.) gives a good summary of Nestorian history.

Mesopotamia and Syria whence it came, northward and eastward through many intervening tribes into Tartary, China, India: so that there was a time when a separate Christendom flourished, Syrian, Chaldæan, Oriental, tinged more or less with Nestorian views, which rivalled in numbers[3] and extent of territory the Greek and Latin Churches taken together.

*Syrian Church.*

But this great body held the name Nestorian only as a term of reproach. The parent, they contended, ought not to take the name of the child: Nestorius might be called a Syrian, but not the Syrians Nestorians.[4] They abhorred, however, the memory of "the Egyptian"; they rejected the Council of Ephesus. On the other hand, most of them honored the names of Nestorius, Theodorus, and Diodorus. For the rest, their religion may be described as a cautious and captious[5] Catholicism. They professed to hold "without variation what they had received from Apostolic times." In doctrine, they were averse to new definitions; in morals, they avoided enthusiasm. Developments, whether good or bad, found little favor among them. Their Clergy, except the highest order, were allowed to marry as often as they pleased. The same liberty was accorded to monks and nuns. Scripture they preferred in the grammatical sense: the versions in use among them have proved, in most of the disputed texts,[6] more correct than those which orthodox writers have cited against them. On the whole, while their separation from the rest of Christendom had the effect of dwarfing their theology,

*How far Nestorian.*

*Peculiar Views.*

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[3] Thomassin. *Vet. et Nov. Eccles. Disciplin.* pars i. liber i. cap. xxiv. vii.

[4] "Why," they asked, "should they be called after a Greek whom they had never seen, and who knew not a word of their language?" See Asseman. *Bib. Orient.* tom. iii. pars ii. vii. 5.

[5] Thus their principal objection to the Theotókos was, that *Theos* is the name of *the Trinity* rather than of any one Person of the Trinity. They were unwilling to use terms in the same sense with other Catholics. Asseman. tom. iii vii. 6.

[6] Asseman. tom. iii. pars ii. vii. 7.

so that they failed to express, and perhaps to grasp, the great Truth of the Incarnation, yet on the other hand, they avoided many of the superstitions, abuses, and corruptions which the livelier fancy of the Greeks and the sensuous spirit of the Latins readily admitted.

*An arrested Growth.*

We have thus the remarkable spectacle of a mighty Church, a full third of the Household of Faith, which became an arrested growth, as it were—a stereotype, a witness holden under bonds—of the religion of the first four centuries. Like S. Thomas, its great Apostle,[7] Syrian Christianity believed up to a certain point, but then halted, not so much in unbelief as in a rational perplexity. The Nestorian quarrel was the occasion, not the cause of this. The cause perhaps lies in the simple fact that what may be called the *vernacular* Christianity of the East, growing up in the shade of that brilliant Greek exotic which appears almost alone in early history, had taken root far and wide, with a language, tradition, and peculiar temper of its own; so that a separation long going on, and at some time inevitable, was precipitated by the misunderstandings of the Nestorian conflict.

*Principle involved.*

Something of the same sort had appeared before in the history of Judaic Christianity. We shall see a similar spectacle again in the great Monophysite schisms, and later still, in the gradual estrangement of the Greeks and Latins. In the progress of the Church, whether towards good or evil, there is not always that charity for the slow and feeble of the company, which induced Jacob[8] to "lead on softly," instead of attempting to keep pace with the swifter march of his brother. The tendency to "overdrive," on the one hand, and to lag unduly on the other, has proved in all ages a chief provocative of schism.

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[7] A very respectable tradition makes S. Thomas the Apostle of the Syrians, Chaldæans, Parthians, Persians, Medes, and East Indians. For this, and for an account of the Christians of S. Thomas in India, see Asseman. *Bib. Orient.* tom. iii.

[8] Gen. xxxiii. 13, 14.

## CHAPTER III.

### EUTYCHES AND THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON.

*Dioscorus and Theodoret.*

THE Council of Ephesus failed to satisfy either of the extreme parties in the question of the Incarnation: and even some who held a middle ground were not altogether content with its decisions. Cyril tried in vain to crown his previous efforts by procuring the condemnation of Theodorus of Mopsuestia. A fiercer war was waged between Theodoret of Cyrus and Dioscorus of Alexandria, the successor of S. Cyril: a leaning towards Nestorius, on the one side, and towards Apollinaris, on the other, being the alleged ground of dispute.

*Eutyches.*

Eutyches, an aged and venerated Abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, was strongly suspected of the latter error;[1] and was formally accused of it by the same Eusebius of Dorylæum who had been so forward in exposing the pravity of Nestorius.

*Council at C. P.,* A.D. 448.

For seventy years the old man had lived in his monastery as in a tomb; never venturing out, except in one instance when he went to bear witness against the heresy of Nestorius. At length, however, he is forced from his retreat. Summoned before a Synod at Constantinople, he is questioned and cross-questioned: he resorts in vain to excuses, quibbles, evasions; seems to admit, and seems equally to deny, the charges brought against him: but amid all his obscurities and contradictions, maintains with obstinate conviction, that *there are not two Natures in Christ after the Incarnation, but one Nature incarnate.*

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[1] Evagrii, *H. E.* i. 9.

*Three forms of the Heresy.*

What he meant by this is not very clear. He may have supposed, with Apollinaris, that the Divine Word assumed *only two* of the three elements of our nature; or, with the Docetæ, that His Body was *phantasmal;* or, with the Monophysites, that the two Natures were so wrought together, like the soul and body of man, as to make up *one compound Nature.* The extreme followers of Eutyches afterwards held the second of these errors. As to Eutyches himself, the Council forced him to acknowledge that *our Lord is of one substance with us, according to His flesh;* but when called on to anathematize the opposite opinion, he stubbornly refused.

*Eutyches condemned.*

The Synod condemned him: the old man protesting, however, amid much confusion, that he held the Faith of Nicæa and Ephesus; that he subscribed to the doctrine of Cyril and Athanasius; and that he was willing to abide by the judgment of Rome and Alexandria.

*A new Trial ordered.*

Flavianus, then Patriarch of Constantinople, had endeavored at first to abate the ardor of his colleagues, but at last felt obliged to concur in their decision. The Emperor Theodosius was not so easily convinced. To him the whole affair looked like a plot of the Nestorianizing party. So it seemed also to Dioscorus of Alexandria. As Eutyches had been a staunch friend of S. Cyril, it was natural enough to suspect the motives of those who had condemned him. A new Council therefore was called by the Emperor, to meet at Ephesus, and Flavianus and his colleagues were put on trial.

*Character of Dioscorus.*

Dioscorus, the leader of the Synod, had inherited the fiery zeal of his great predecessors, without their laborious and self-denying love of the Truth.[2] He had won the Episcopate by an extraordinary show of sanctity and humility. But he soon laid himself open to charges of a grasping and tyrannical spirit. He ill-treated the Clergy. Under the pretext of charity, he confiscated into the Church treasury the property of S. Cyril, thereby defrauding his heirs. What was still more scandalous, his palace was frequented by mimes or dancers; and the courtesan Irene was notoriously kept as his concubine. Finally, he was possessed, to an extraordinary degree, with the Alexandrian jealousy of Constantinople.

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[2] Tillemont, tom. xv.; *S. Leon,* art. ix; Neale's *H. E. Ch.* Book II. sect. iv.

*His Colleagues.*

With this Dioscorus, Juvenal of Jerusalem and Thalassius of Cæsarea shared the responsibility of the Council, being named in the Emperor's letter as his co-assessors. There were present also about one hundred and twenty-five Bishops.

*Robber Council,* A.D. 449.

From the disorderly character of its proceedings, the assembly was branded in later times with the title Latrocinium, or Robber Council. We have its Acts only as subsequently related at Chalcedon by prelates who, on their own showing, had been bullied into a shameful compliance, and whose interest it was to make Dioscorus the scapegoat of their own shortcomings. Such witnesses are apt to exaggerate the violence to which they have succumbed. It seems pretty certain, however, that little regard was paid to the usual forms of synodical action; that a large body of soldiers and counts, and a still larger body of monks, were ready to do the bidding of Dioscorus; that when opposition arose, the monks rushed in; that some of the Bishops were bruised, some wounded, some put in chains, some forced to sign a blank paper; that, with the exception of one Roman Legate who protested and fled, all finally gave way: that, in short, Eutyches was cleared, while Flavianus and Eusebius were condemned, deposed, and thrown into prison. Flavianus died not long after, of injuries received at the hands of Dioscorus. The Acts, as corrected by the latter, say nothing of all this violence. Unfortunately no other records remained: for the tablets kept by the notaries of the other Bishops had been seized, it was said, by order of Dioscorus, and had been all destroyed. Such is the substance of the testimony given at the Council of Chalcedon.

*Eutyches cleared: Flavianus condemned.*

Dioscorus, in all this, was countenanced by the Court: and acting, as he thought, in the interest of a dominant party, secure of the sympathy of the great body of the monks,[3] confident in the prestige of a See so often and so recently victorious, and fighting in a cause which seemed almost identical with that of S. Cyril, he may well have counted on the strength of party spirit to bear him out in his violence, and to pardon, perhaps to reward, the excesses of his zeal.

*Mistake of Dioscorus.*

The event soon showed how much he was mistaken. Party spirit in the Church was strong, not blind. Furious and unseemly as were the passions of the age, the mightiest passion still was love for the Truth. In the height of the tempest of religious animosities, there was a guiding star, there was a certain goal. The Incarnation, as a reality and a fact, must be cleared of every theory, however plausible, that might serve in any way to obscure it. By losing sight of this, more than by his arbitrary acts, Dioscorus lost at once and forever, for himself and for his See, the advantages of his strong position.

*Zeal for the Truth.*

Leo, the Roman Bishop, was the first to move against him. Before the meeting at Ephesus, he had written to Flavianus that famous Letter, which still remains a standard of Church teaching on the subject of the Incarnation. Dioscorus took care that the Letter should not be read in the Council. For this and other reasons, Leo urged the Emperor to take the necessary steps for bringing him to trial.

*Leo demands a new Council.*

Theodosius declined: for it was the fate of this feeble prince, more of a monk than of an Emperor, to foster the first growth of both those opposite, but kindred, heresies, which were destined from that time forth to distract the East.

*The Emperor declines.*

Not long after, he departed this life. His feeble and peaceful, but inglorious, reign, beginning with an infancy of seven years, and ending with what was hardly more than an infancy of fifty, had yet afforded some proof[4] to mankind "that piety *alone* suffices for the prosperity and safety of princes." No wars of any consequence had disturbed the East: no rebellion had unsheathed the sword of justice. For this he owed much to his sister Pulcheria, who, having devoted herself to the virgin life and induced her two sisters to do likewise, superintended the education of her brother, and was afterwards the soul of all his counsels. She furnished him with able masters in "horsemanship and the use of arms, in literature and science." Another part of his training, and perhaps the only part in which he profited much, was carefully looked to by the princess herself: "she showed him how to gather up his robes, and how to take a seat; to refrain from ill-timed laughter, to assume a mild or formidable aspect as the occasion might require, to inquire with urbanity into the cases of those who came before him with petitions. But chiefly she strove to imbue his mind with piety and with the love of prayer; to go to Church regularly; to contribute liberally to the erection and embellishment of sacred buildings; to reverence the priests and other good men, and especially those who, in accordance with the laws of Christianity, had devoted themselves to philosophic asceticism."

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[3] Dioscorus is charged with the crime of corrupting the manners of the monks: the corruption, however, had begun a good while before.

*Character of his Reign,* A.D. 407-450.

*Pulcheria.*

*Education of Theodosius the Younger.*

Under this feminine, but firm, regime, the palace was more than half a monastery, and monkery luxuriated in a dreamland of unbridled imagination. It was at this period that Symeon,[5] the famous pillar-saint, lived on the top of a post two cubits in circumference, "endeavoring to realize in the body the existence of the heavenly hosts." Nor was his a solitary example. His whim became a rule of life to hosts of imitators. Indeed, such was the religious exaltation of the age, that Symeon, after all, was a sample of the more sober rather than of the wilder moods of ascetic enthusiasm.

*Monachism luxuriant.*

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[4] Sozom. ix. 1–3; Evagr. i. 12–22; Socrat. vii. 42.

[5] The historians, especially Evagrius, dwell with rapture upon these extravagances. Evag. i. 13, 14, 21.

*Eudocia.*

A pilgrimage of the Empress Eudocia to Jerusalem, in imitation of S. Helena, enabled her to witness, and caused contemporary writers admiringly to record, a few of these wilder excesses of the monastic spirit.

*Strange forms of Asceticism.*

There were some "philosophers" who, by continuous fasts and vigils, aimed at the condition of "tombless corpses": to be bloodless nerveless, passionless, silent as the grave, was the height of their perfection. Others lived in holes or caves or lairs of wild beasts, just large enough to admit the body in a crouching posture. Others, of either sex, roved almost naked in herds, through wilds and deserts, shunning the face of civilized men, browsing like beasts, and eluding all pursuit by supernatural swiftness of foot. There were others, a chosen and "perfect" few, who by such exercises having attained the pinnacle of philosophic "apathy," threw themselves down, as it were, into the common crowd, mixed with the world, courted temptation, frequented the public baths without regard to the distinction of sex, "became men with men and women with women," fasted, sometimes by total abstinence from food, sometimes by indulging "against their will" in luxurious repasts: in short, claimed to be "dead men" haunting the abodes of the living, and were popularly regarded with a corresponding reverence.

*Liberality of the Empress.*

Such were some of the spectacles with which Eudocia was edified in her munificent journey through the East: such had come to be considered the most perfect fruits of that monastic system upon which she and Pulcheria, and the Court in general, were disposed to lavish the treasures of the Empire. At a later period, the Empress herself became a mark for scandal, fell into disgrace with her pious husband, and found a refuge amid the scenes which she had learned to admire.

*Sensuous Enthusiasm.*

The vast numbers who indulged in such extravagances, or at least lent countenance to them, might lead one to conclude that the world at this time was running mad. In the East, however, it has never been the custom to shut up the insane. The vagaries which with us are hidden out of sight and almost forgotten, are there permitted to go at large, objects of reverence rather than of horror or shuddering compassion. But with all allowance for considerations of this kind, it is still plain that, in the age of the younger Theodosius, sensuous enthusiasm was fearfully increasing: so that, while cultivated minds were absorbed in the nice distinctions of a high theology, the people were straying, almost without check, into the wilds of a fanciful but grovelling superstition.

*Relic-Worship.*

Relic-worship, especially, received a new impulse at this time. The discovery of the remains of saints, from Zachary the Prophet and Stephen the Protomartyr, down to the forty who suffered in the army of Licinius, is a theme upon which historians[6] had learned to dwell with rapture. Pulcheria is for nothing more highly lauded than for the Divine instinct she possessed for discoveries of this kind.

*Marcian Emperor,* A.D. 450.

On the death of her brother, the reins of government fell naturally into the hands of Pulcheria. She yielded so far to the prejudice that existed against feminine rule, as to choose a nominal husband and partner of the throne, in the person of Marcian, an aged and worthy senator. With these changes in the Palace, there came also a new policy with regard to Church affairs. The wishes of Pope Leo, disregarded by Theodosius, were at length carried out; and, that peace might be restored to the Church, it was determined to call a Synod as nearly universal as the power of the Emperor could make it.

*Council of Chalcedon,* A.D. 451.

Nicæa was first selected as the place for the Council. But Attila, at this time, was threatening the Empire with his hordes of victorious Huns, and it was not convenient that the Court should at such a crisis be absent from the capital. The Bishops therefore were summoned to Chalcedon. There they finally assembled, in the Church of S. Euphemia, by the sea-side, a most charming spot[7] commanding a matchless view of the Propontis, the Imperial city, and the majestic amphitheatre of wooded hills that rose in stately beauty behind.

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[6] Sozom. ix. 2, 17; Evag. i. 16.

Pains had been taken to have the Church at large numerously represented.[8] About six hundred and thirty Bishops obeyed the summons to attend. The bulk of these came, as usual, from the East: the West was represented by the Legates of Pope Leo, who also sent letters to Marcian the Emperor, to Anatolius who had succeeded Flavianus in the See of Constantinople, and especially to the Council itself. The majesty of the Empire also was imposingly set forth. Nineteen high officers, "most magnificent and most illustrious," consuls and ex-consuls, prefects and ex-prefects, magistrates and counts, civil and military, sat conspicuously on a platform before the Altar rails, as "judges most illustrious," the counsellors, assessors, and moderators generally of the proceedings of the Synod. On the left of these, two "most reverend" Bishops and one "most religious" Presbyter held the place of Leo, "the most holy and most reverend Archbishop of the mother city, Rome." The thrones of Constantinople, Antioch, Cæsarea, Ephesus, with the Bishops of Asia, Pontus, Thrace, came next in order. On the other side, Alexandria was first, then Jerusalem, with the Bishops of Egypt, Palestine, Illyria. The Presence of the Lord was fitly symbolized, as at Ephesus, by a Book of the Holy Gospels placed in the midst of the assembly.

*Number and Order of the Bishops.*

*Officers of the Empire.*

Order being thus established, Paschasinus, a Legate of "the

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[7] Evagrius enlarges on the beauty of the scenery and on the delicious odor, surpassing all terrestrial perfumes, which exhaled from the body of S. Euphemia. To the prayers of this Saint much of the success of the Council was attributed.

[8] Copious accounts of this Council, including the Latrocinium, etc., are given in the *Concilia*. See also Evagrius, B. ii.; also, for a useful summary, Hammond's *Councils and Canons;* Tillemont, tom. xv. *S. Leon;* Neale's *H. E. Ch.*

Apostolic See," stood up and said to the "most illustrious Judges and the most eminent assembly," "We hold in our hands instructions from that most blessed and apostolic man, the Pope of the city Rome, the head of all the Churches, that Dioscorus shall not be permitted to sit in the Council. These instructions *we* are bound to follow. Therefore, if it please your magnificence, let Dioscorus go out, or else we go." The Judges asked, "What charges in particular are brought against the most reverend Bishop Dioscorus?" "We allege," replied the Legate, "that he has dared to hold a Synod without the authority of the Apostolic See, a thing never done before, nor ever allowed." The Judges said, "You must set forth the particulars wherein he has offended." One of the Legates answered, "We cannot suffer such a wrong to ourselves or to you, as that a man who is on trial should sit here among us." The Judges then said to Dioscorus, "If you sit as a judge, you cannot be at the same time a party to the cause." Thereupon, Dioscorus placing himself as ordered in the midst of the assembly, and the Legates sitting in their own seats, Eusebius, "the most religious Bishop of the city Dorylæum," came forward and said: "By the safety of the masters of the world, command my petition to be read, as the most pious Emperor has directed. I have been wronged by Dioscorus; the Faith has been wronged; Bishop Flavianus has been murdered. Along with me he has been unrighteously condemned. Order my petition to be read." The most illustrious Judges and the most eminent assembly answered, "Let the petition be read." Then, Eusebius being ordered to sit down in his place, Veronicianus, "the sacred Secretary of the Divine Consistory," took the petition from his hands and read it

*First Business.*

*Dioscorus on Trial.*

Such was the opening of the business at Chalcedon. It was a trial of Eutyches, Dioscorus and the Robber Council. Petitions were heard, Acts were read, testimony was received, Dioscorus the meanwhile pleading his own cause with great coolness and ability. The most he could prove was that he was not alone in fault. In this he

*Dioscorus and his Colleagues condemned.*

succeeded so well that, when he was finally condemned, his principal colleagues in the proceedings at Ephesus shared his sentence. These, however, had already made their peace with Leo. They were equally prompt in submission to the Council, and were consequently restored. The guilt of Dioscorus was aggravated by contumacy, and by numerous acts of violence, tyranny, rapacity and scandalous behavior.

*Definitions of the Faith.*

With the condemnation of Eutyches and Dioscorus, the doctrine of the Incarnation was more exactly defined; and the four words, *truly*, *perfectly*, *indivisibly*, *without confusion*, became from that time the sum of the testimony of the four great Councils, the safeguard against every wind of error, from whatever quarter it might blow. That Jesus Christ is *true* God, had been witnessed at Nicæa; that He is *perfect* Man, had been defined at Constantinople; that He is *indivisibly* One Person, had been settled at Ephesus: finally, the six hundred and thirty at Chalcedon declared that "He is one and the same Christ, the Son, the Lord, the Only-begotten, *in*[9] *two Natures*, *without confusion*, *change*, division or separation."

*Leo's Letter.*

Most fully and accurately had all this been expressed in the famous Letter of Pope Leo.[10] Accordingly when that document was read, the Council received it with acclamations: "This is the Faith of the Fathers; this is the Faith of the Apostles. Anathema to him who believes it not. Peter has spoken by the mouth of Leo. Religiously and truly has Leo taught. So Cyril taught. Cyril and Leo have taught alike. Anathema to him who believes not with them." But some of the Illyrian and Palestine Bishops objected to certain expressions in the Letter. Thereupon parallel passages were cited from the writings of S. Cyril. Some of the Bishops being still unsatisfied, the Judges at length consented to a postponement of the subject for five days, during which the disputed phrases might be examined more carefully, and compared with

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[9] The word "*in* two Natures" was carried by the urgency of the Papal Legates, many of the Easterns preferring to say "*of*." *Concil. Chalced.* Act. v.

[10] Carefully translated in Neale's *H. E. Ch.*

*Accepted on its Merits, not on Authority.*

admitted standards. Anatolius, the successor of Flavianus, was appointed to conduct the investigation. After seven days the committee reported;[11] the objectors were satisfied; and it was unanimously declared that Leo's Tome, inasmuch as it accorded with the witness of the Three Hundred and Eighteen at Nicæa, of the Hundred and Fifty at Constantinople, and with the writings of S. Cyril approved at Ephesus, was to be received and subscribed as a true exposition of the Faith.

*The condemned Bishops.*

*Hard Case of the Egyptians.*

A more difficult matter, involving bitter feelings and leading to stormy scenes, was the treatment of the Bishops who had fallen under the censure of the Council.[12] The colleagues of Dioscorus at Ephesus were let off lightly, as has been already mentioned. As to Dioscorus himself, his doom was irrevocable, and he was banished to Gangra in Paphlagonia, where he died some three years after. Thirteen Egyptians, his suffragans, threw themselves upon the mercy of their brethren. They held the Faith, they were willing to subscribe, they were ready to anathematize all heretics, but how could they do so until a new head should be chosen over them? Their excuses were met with a storm of reprobation. "Why have they not anathematized the dogma of Eutyches? They are trying to deceive us and get off. Let them do as the rest have done. Let them subscribe the Tome of Leo. Let them anathematize Dioscorus." The Bishops threw themselves on the ground. "Have mercy on us. Pity our gray hairs. We are too few to act for the whole of Egypt. If we venture so to do, they will banish us, they will murder us, all Egypt will rise against us, we shall waste our days in exile. Be compassionate, be merciful. If you wish us to be killed, slay us yourselves. Let us die here at your feet." One of the Roman Legates answered by a cruel taunt: "Are men of your years so ignorant of the true Faith, that you must wait forsooth for the opinions of other people?" Eusebius of Dorylæum said flatly, "They are liars." Another prelate cried,

[11] *Concil. Chalced.* Act. iv.

[12] *Concil. Chalced.* Act. iv.

"If they do not know their own mind, how can they choose a Bishop?" The Church resounded with similar exclamations. The Judges, however, decided that their request was reasonable, and a truce was accorded them until a new Patriarch should be appointed.

*Their Request allowed.*

Theodoret of Cyrus was still under a cloud, from the part he had taken in the Nestorian controversy. When he entered the Council, therefore, at its first session, he was greeted with a Babel of angry cries. "Away with the Nestorian!" shouted the Egyptians: "Away with Theodoret, who anthematized S. Cyril!" The Orientals retorted, "Away with Dioscorus, away with the murderer of Flavianus!" The Judges allowed him to remain as one on trial. In the eighth session his case was called up by a cry from the whole assembly: "Let Theodoret now anathematize Nestorius!" Theodoret passed over to the middle of the Church and said: "I have presented a petition to the most divine and religious Emperor, and I have handed in a memorial to the most reverend Bishops who here hold the place of the most reverend Archbishop Leo: now, therefore, if it please you, let my papers be read, that ye may know what is my belief." The Bishops shouted, "We want nothing read: anathematize Nestorius!" Theodoret replied, "By the grace of God I was brought up in the right faith, and in the right faith was I instructed, and the right faith have I preached: and not only Nestorius and Eutyches, but every other heretic I utterly abhor." The Bishops interrupted him by exclaiming: "Speak out clearly and at once; anathematize Nestorius!" Theodoret persisted in the attempt to define his position, but before he had uttered three sentences he was again cut short: "Speak plainly and unequivocally; anathematize Nestorius!" But he was determined to be heard: "If I am not to explain myself, I cannot speak at all. I believe . . ." The rest of his speech was drowned in a general outcry: "He is a heretic. He is a Nestorian. Put the heretic out!" He at length had to yield. He anathematized Nestorius; the

*Case of Theodoret.*

*He attempts to explain.*

*A Hearing denied him.*

*He submits.*

Judges pronounced him clear; and the Synod in due form received him into favor.

*Canon* xxviii.

The Council concluded its labors by enacting twenty-eight canons: the last of which reaffirmed the Eastern rule of precedence, by giving the second place of honor to Constantinople as new Rome. This was earnestly opposed by the Roman Legates.[13] It was contrary, they urged, to the sixth canon of Nicæa, which declares that *Rome shall have the primacy.* But this was shown at once to be a false reading. They then urged that the Bishops present who had signed the twenty-eighth canon had done so against their will. But this was indignantly and unanimously denied. The Judges finally decided in favor of the canon, the Bishops stood by their decision, and though Leo afterwards declared it null and void, as being contrary to the sixth canon of Nicæa, yet it became law in the Eastern Church, and even Rome at a later period was obliged to acquiesce in it.[14]

*End of the Council.*

So ended a Synod, the most complete, the most imposing, and in some respects the most important, of all that had gone under the name of Ecumenical Councils.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MONOPHYSITES.

*Effect of the Council.*

The testimony of Chalcedon, like that of Ephesus, had its wholesome effect mainly upon the upper soil of the Empire, upon the cultivated and courtly Greek intellect. The elements that lay lower, the Coptic, Syriac, Oriental mind, were only stirred by it into a poisonous fermentation.

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[13] *Concil. Chalced.* Act. xvi.

[14] Tillemont, tom. xv.; *S. Leon*, art. cxxxvii.

In Egypt, the doom of Dioscorus was furiously resented. Alexandria broke out into riot and revolt.[1] On the arrival of Proterius, the new Patriarch appointed at Chalcedon, the populace assaulted the magistrates and troops, stormed the old temple of Serapis in which they had taken refuge, and having at length seized the victims of their displeasure, committed them alive to the flames. A reinforcement from the capital changed the face of affairs. The soldiery were in turn triumphant; the citizens were quelled: rape and robbery were the order of the day.

*Troubles in Egypt,* A.D. 452.

A hollow truce ensued; but faction was still busy beneath the surface. Timothy, a Presbyter, surnamed Ælurus, the Cat, from his feline way of creeping into the cells of the Monks by night, sedulously fanned the embers of sedition. The flames burst forth anew on the death of the Emperor. Proterius, the Patriarch, was the principal victim. Being murdered in the Baptistery, whither he had fled, he was disembowelled, dragged by a rope through the streets amid the jeers of the crowd, torn limb from limb, and finally, with that thorough-going savagery which distinguished the Alexandrians, what remained of him was burnt and the ashes scattered to the winds. Timothy was believed to have been at the bottom of all this. He, however, charged it upon the soldiers. It is more certain that he managed to get himself made Bishop, and that "the people of Alexandria, with their dignitaries, senators, and shipmasters," petitioned the Emperor Leo to ratify the act. But there was a protest from all quarters against such a profanation. Among others, Symeon, the pillar-saint, wrote earnestly to prevent it. In the end, Timothy the Cat was banished, and another Timothy was elected in his place.

*Timothy the Cat.*

*Murder of Proterius,* A.D. 457.

From that time, the history of the Church in Egypt is a melancholy picture of decay, varied only by a few saintly names, such as that of John the Almoner,[2] a man who left a memory worthy of better times. The mass of the people clung to the tenets of Dioscorus. The Catholics kept up a feeble succession in Alexandria, who were called, and called themselves,[3] *Melchites* or Royalists: a name sufficiently indicative that the feud was political and social as well as theological. Catholicism, in fact, seemed more and more, in the eyes of the Egyptians, the badge of an odious dependence upon Constantinople. It was a Hellenism which the true Copt had learned to abhor.

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[1] Evag. ii. 5, 8–11.

[2] Neale's *H. E. Ch.* Book III.

*Decline of the Church in Egypt.*

A shadow of this growing alienation had appeared long before in the times of the Meletian schism: we may see glimpses of it also in the history of Monachism, and nowhere more clearly than in the life of S. Antony himself.

*Shadows cast before.*

For it is noted of that Saint that he was ignorant of Greek, and spake to his "children" in their native tongue. The same is true of the great eremites in general. The strange religious movement initiated by them, that mysterious epidemic which peopled the deserts and gave a new impulse to popular Christianity, drew its weird and sombre life from the old Coptic mind rather than from the sunny and rationalizing Greeks. Yet so long as Greek rule centred in Alexandria, Egyptian Monachism was kept well in hand. Athanasius caressed it, Theophilus and Cyril were glad to humor it, Dioscorus corrupted it or was corrupted by it. But with the fall of Dioscorus the sceptre passed from Alexandria. Hellenism, in consequence, became foreign and detestable. Timothy the Cat, not a bad type of the old *genius loci*, began to purr portentously in the cells of the monks and in the hovels of the people. The country, in short, had followed with some reluctance the lead of Alexandria: from the sway of Constantinople it furiously revolted.

*Monachism Coptic, not Greek.*

It might have revolted from Christianity as well, had not the latter been provided with a hold on the public mind much deeper than Greek culture, much stronger than the bonds which kept the Empire together.

*Conservative Elements.*

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[3] Renaudot, p. 119.

The Liturgies, it is probable, had been long celebrated in the Coptic as well as in the Greek :[4] the latter predominating in the cities, the former in the country. From the time of Dioscorus, the Coptic prevailed more and more. Further south the Ethiopian was employed, or other vernacular tongues. In those languages the orthodoxy and devotion of the first four centuries remained, as it were, embalmed : for the flow of current speech soon drifted far away from the sacred standards, and the new religious idioms became as unintelligible and obsolete as the old.

*Worship in the vulgar Tongue.*

The Monophysite Patriarchs, so long as the Emperors maintained a show of authority over Egypt, were obliged to live in exile : their residence being the monastery of S. Macarius, in the Thebais. Timothy the Cat, however, enjoyed a brief restoration to the throne of Alexandria, and was succeeded by Peter Mongus, one of the ablest of the sect. But he also was banished after a little while. His successors lived out of reach of the Greek tongue and Greek ideas, ruling numberless communities of monks, and keeping a firm hold through them upon the hearts of the people.

*Patriarchs and Monks.*

A.D. 476–477.

Separated thus in language, in temper, in political views, in social and religious habits, in that bias of blood and race which no rule as yet has ever permanently subdued, Coptic Christianity has henceforth little in common with the Greek Establishment. Its sympathies are with the Vernacularism of the East : of which, as the Nestorian schism had carried off a large section, the Monophysites fell heirs to as much as remained.

*Coptic Christianity.*

With regard to Egypt and its dependencies, Nubia, Ethiopia, Abyssinia and parts of Arabia, the quarrel was carried on with a fury of which some unhappy examples have already been given. It is needless to add more.[5] The decay of great States engenders a "madness of the people," to which

*Madness of the People.*

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[4] Renaudot, *Liturg. Oriental.* cap. vi.; Palmer's *Origines Liturg.*

[5] In troublous times men's minds, especially in the East, are prone to exaggeration : so that the hundreds of thousands slain in some of the religious

no crime seems too atrocious, no folly too extravagant: so that the testimony of an ancient Bishop[6] may have a grain of truth in it when he declares that, "under the consulship of Venantius and Celer, the people of Alexandria and all Egypt were seized with a strange and diabolical frenzy: great and small, slaves and freedmen, monks and clergy, the natives of the land who opposed the Synod of Chalcedon, lost their speech and reason, barked like dogs, and tore with their own teeth the flesh from their own hands and arms." However this may be, the alienation of the Egyptians went on increasing. By the middle of the seventh century it had gone so far that, when the Saracens came in, the standard of the Church and Empire was upheld only by a trembling remnant in Alexandria: the mass of the people were ready to welcome the new yoke, and many of them, perhaps, the new religion.

*Entire Alienation.*

A like falling away, from the same or like causes, had followed the Council of Chalcedon in Palestine and Syria. The monks, as usual, were at the bottom of the mischief.

*General falling away.*

In Palestine, Theodosius and other ascetics had come back from the Council fuming with indignation. The Faith had been betrayed, their Order had been slighted. Such was the cry that resounded through the wilderness and kindled the monastic heart. The Patriarch Juvenalis fled in terror from Jerusalem and took refuge in Constantinople: Theodosius, the meanwhile, ordaining whom he would, stirring the people far and wide to revolt against the Empire, and turning the Church upside down. The rebellion was subdued, and Juvenalis was restored to his See. But order and peace returned not with him. "Many sad occurrences followed his arrival, and either party indulged in whatever proceedings their anger suggested."

*In Palestine,* A.D. 452.

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riots might be safely reduced, perhaps, to as many hundreds. See Gibbon, ch. xlvii. v., and Neale, vol. ii. pp. 33, 44.

[6] Victor Tunnunensis, quoted by Gibbon, ch. xlvii.

The quarrel, ostensibly, hinged upon a letter: whether Christ is *in*, or *of*, two Natures, was a question that made men "reckless of death in any shape," that excited the most bitter and enduring animosities. But, in reality, there was much that lay behind the apparent question. In Palestine, as in Egypt, the souls of men were galled by inveterate misrule: the harness of Greek sway had grown stiff and cumbersome, the back of Nativism was sore, and winced at every touch.

*Difference of a Letter.*

*Real Quarrel.*

In Syria, the chief agitator was Barsumas, the ringleader of that famous thousand who had abetted Eutyches and Dioscorus in the Robber Council. He also returned in a fury from Chalcedon, where he had been condemned, and communicated his rage far and wide through Syria. Through some of his followers the infection extended into Mesopotamia and Armenia. In the middle of the sixth century, the Monk Jacob, surnamed Baradai, or the Ragged, afterwards Bishop of Edessa, propagated it more largely and organized it more powerfully. From him was the main line of Monophysite Patriarchs. From him the sect took the name Jacobite, by which it is best known in history.

*In Syria.*

*Jacob Baradai,* A.D. 541-578.

In all these instances the general result was the same:[7] the establishment of schismatical Patriarchates, with their dependencies, in Syria, Armenia, Egypt; the fixing of creeds, canons, customs, and ritual observances, at the point which they had reached before the Council of Chalcedon; the more general use, in worship, of the vernacular tongues; a continuous disintegration into sects and schisms; yet withal a certain conservatism, in the midst of furious agitations,[8] which fossilized the religion of *three*, as Nestorianism had done that of *two*, General Councils, and kept it a mute witness to later times.

*General Result.*

Such conservatism, however, was of the letter rather than of the spirit. The Monophysite heresy professed, like the Nestorian, to follow the old paths and to be content with the old definitions. But the root of both errors was an aversion to the mystery of the Incarnation. From a bias usually ascribed to Oriental philosophy, but belonging, perhaps, to philosophy in general, men shrank from such a *nearness* of God and man. They endeavored to evade it: Nestorius, by separating the two Natures in two distinct persons; Eutyches, by so joining the two as to cause the less to be swallowed up of the greater.

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[7] See Assemanni, *Bibliothec. Oriental.* tom. ii.

[8] The Liturgies were the conservative element: and the very violence of controversy made men jealous of any alterations in the Liturgies.

*Nature of the Heresy.*

*The same in principle with the Nestorian.*

Of the numberless Monophysite sects,[9] the Armenians were chiefly *Eutychian:* they held, that is, to the tenet of a *phantasmal* or ethereal body, and were called *Phantasiasts* or *Docetæ.* There were numerous shades of this opinion. The *Incorrupticolæ* held that the Flesh of Christ was not subject to the usual wear and repair of the human body: their opponents they branded as *Phthartolatræ*, *Ktistolatræ*, worshippers of the corruptible, creature-worshippers. They differed, and split into minor sects, on the question whether the Flesh of Christ was *created* incorruptible, or *rendered* incorruptible, or *uncreated* as well as incorruptible. The *Theopaschites* maintained that the Divinity suffered on the Cross: their symbol, however, the addition to the Trisagion of the phrase, "*Who wast crucified for us*," can be easily understood in an orthodox sense.

*Sects. Eutychians.*

The Egyptians followed Dioscorus, and contended that *as body and soul make one man, so the Divinity and Humanity make up one compound Nature in Christ.* These again were divided into numerous sects.

*Dioscorians.*

Syria was the great battle-field of Orientalism in general. There Eutychians and Dioscorians anathematized one another: while both waged a vigorous war with the Catholics and Nestorians. There was a disposition, however, to fall back occasionally on the ground of indifferentism;[10] so

*Syria the Battle-field.*

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[9] Asseman. tom. ii. *Dissertat.* iv.; Neale's *H. E. Ch.* vol. ii. iii. 1.

[10] Asseman. tom. ii. *Dissertat.* iii.

that the religious strifes of the East were diversified by truces and times of intercommunion.

*Policy of the Emperors.*

In the meanwhile the Emperors, who were virtually the popes of the Melchites, the heads and defenders of Greek Catholicism, were doing what they could to settle the religious quarrels of their subjects.

*Leo, A.D. 458.*

With this view, Leo, Marcian's successor, consulted the Metropolitans of the East as to the expediency of passing by the decrees of Chalcedon:[11] they, however, declined to concur in any such measure.

*Zeno. The Henoticon.*

With the same view, Zeno, by the advice of the Patriarch Acacius, issued his famous *Henoticon*,[12] or edict of unity. To put an end to a strife "by which multitudes were deprived of the Laver of Regeneration, and multitudes more of the grace of the Divine Communion; through which murders innumerable were committed, so that earth and the very air were defiled with blood:" he declared that the Faith of the Three Hundred and Eighteen, with the added testimony of Constantinople and Ephesus, including the twelve Anathemas of Cyril and the anathemas pronounced against Nestorius and Eutyches, would be satisfactory and sufficient. The Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo he quietly passed over.

*How received.*

The omission was intended as a peace-offering to the Egyptians, and was favorably received by large numbers, both of the heretics and moderate Catholics. Peter the Fuller and Peter Mongus, the Monophysite Patriarchs in Antioch and Alexandria, gave in their adherence. But many of their party broke off from them, and were thenceforth known in history as *Acephali*, or Headless. Among the Catholics there were similar divisions. Felix II. of Rome, resenting the slight put upon his See in the omission of Leo's Tome from the Henoticon, refused to commune with the Greek Church till the wrong should be redressed; and the schism lasted thirty-five years. His name, when he died, was omitted from the diptychs of Constantinople. On the other

*Schism of East and West, A.D. 484-519.*

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[11] Evag. ii. 9, 10.

[12] Evag. iii. 14.

hand, there was no place in the Roman diptychs for some of the most saintly of the Oriental Bishops. What was worse, certain Monks in the Eastern capital, the Akœmetæ or watchers, took part with Rome: which enabled the latter to harass the rival See, keeping it in a state of perpetual irritation.

*Pacific course of Anastasius.*

Anastasius came to the throne, an old man, fond of peace, averse to the shedding of blood, anxious to conciliate all differences of opinion. But in times of general ferment, neutrality, to be effective, is forced to take up arms, and tolerance becomes less tolerant than bigotry itself. Such proved to be the case with the well-intentioned Emperor. "He deposed those Bishops who proclaimed, and those who anathematized, the Council of Chalcedon."[13] He let them alone, however, if the avowal of their tenets provoked no opposition; and he countermanded the sentence of deposition, in case the enforcing of it should be violently resisted. The result of it all was a decided increase of the spirit of sedition.

*Riots in the Capital.*

Constantinople especially was the theatre of religious tumults,[14] occasioned by an attempt, on the part of certain Monks, to introduce the chanting of the Trisagion with the Antiochean addition, "*Thou that wast crucified for us.*" The first attempts of the kind were easily enough put down. Afterwards the Emperor was advised to enforce the toleration of the obnoxious chant, and two of his officers undertook to sing it in church. A furious riot ensued. The friends of the old Trisagion and the votaries of the new paraded the streets, chanting their respective symbols. From words to blows, from blows to bloodshed, and from bloodshed to a complete saturnalia of incendiarism, sacrilege, pillage, was common enough in an age when Liberty, if it breathed at all, breathed only in convulsive outbreaks. In the present instance, the throne itself was shaken in the tumult. There was a cry on all sides for the Emperor to resign. Anastasius submitted. He appeared before the mob with his diadem in his hand; hearkened with meek attention to the orthodox Trisagion which

*Anastasius resigns,*
A.D. 512.

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[13] Evag. iii. 30, 34.

[14] Evag. iii. 44.

they thundered in his ears; and finally, professing himself willing to abdicate, called upon them, "as all could not reign," to make choice of one to be his successor. The crowd was mollified; and Anastasius, having appeased them further by the blood of the two obnoxious officers, was allowed to resume the semblance of imperial power.

*Rebellion of Vitalian,* A.D. 511-516.

Concessions more ample still were extorted by Vitalian, a Scythian chief, who, enlisting a horde of Huns in the cause of Chalcedon and Rome, devastated Thrace, and threatened Constantinople. More than sixty-five thousand are said to have perished in this rebellion. Anastasius purchased peace by a reconciliation with Rome, the recall of the banished Bishops, and the establishment of the authority of the Council of Chalcedon.

## CHAPTER V.

### JUSTINIAN AND THE FIFTH GENERAL COUNCIL.

*Justinian,* A.D. 527-565.

JUSTINIAN was better fitted to play the part of a lay pope, and his reign exhibited a rank growth of those vices which spring from the mingled seed of politics and religion.[1] Like Theodosius II., he affected the life of a monk, and cherished monkish superstitions. Like Constantius, he spent his time in the critical balancing of dogmas. Like Valens, he was a ruthless persecutor: heretics, Jews, Samaritans, pagans, were all victims in turn of his remorseless edicts; if the Catholics escaped, it was only because his last change of opinion occurred too near his death to allow time for its enforcement. His wife, Theodora, whom he had raised from the condition of an actress to that of partner of his throne,[2] is said to have broken somewhat the force of his tyranny, by putting herself at the head of the opposition party.[3] When he was orthodox, she took care to favor the Monophysites. When he addicted himself to that faction of the circus known as the Blues, she enrolled herself among the Greens. Thus the Imperial ship was steadied to the popular breath, each of the great religious and political factions having its own interest in it.

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[1] Gibbon, ch. xl–xliv. Procopius, the chief authority on Justinian's reign, has left a public history, and a secret: the latter showing how little reliance can be placed on the *coloring* of the former. It is not easy to decide which of the two pictures is nearer the truth. The "Anecdotes," however, present the portrait of a demon rather than of a man, and the amount of vituperation in them is grossly in excess of the credible facts: such portraiture is open to grave suspicion.

*Theodora.*

A more legitimate source of popularity was the munificence, truly imperial,[4] though accompanied (it was said) with an avarice greedy as the sea, with which he strengthened or adorned the Empire, by the erection of castles, cities, bridges, aqueducts, monasteries, churches, alms-houses, hospitals and other public works. The Church of S. Sophia, burnt by the mob in a sedition known as the Nika, was rebuilt with a solidity which remains after thirteen centuries, though shorn of the wealth of beauty with which it was originally adorned.[5]

*Public Works.*

His industry and skill were still more signally displayed in his reform of the Roman Laws.[6] In this great work, as in other achievements of his reign, he was largely indebted, of course, to the workmen he employed: but the ability to choose good workmen, and rightly to direct their labors, is the most useful of imperial talents.

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[2] Even on the showing of Procopius, Theodora made an irreproachable wife, and the constancy of Justinian is beyond all question: we may well doubt, therefore, whether all the filth related of her early life on the stage is more worthy of credit than her commerce with the *Lemures*, or other lies told by the same Procopius. In this matter, Gibbon's love of scandal gets the better of his critical faculty.

[3] Evag. iv. 10.

[4] Procop. Cæsariensis, *De Ædificiis Dn. Justinian.* In the *Anecdotes* it is related that a certain monk saw Justinian swallowing the seas, the bays, the rivers, and even all the sewers of the earth: so great was his avarice. *Hist. Arcan.* cap. xix. He disgorged, however, as rapidly as he swallowed, so that the seas and even the sewers continued to flow on.

[5] Gibbon has admirably brought together the descriptions of Procopius and others, ch. xl.

*Reform of the Roman Laws.*

Such a sovereign, restless, inquisitive, crafty, industrious, greedy of every kind of fame, and in the main not unpopular, could hardly fail to stretch to the utmost his supremacy in spiritual, as well as temporal, affairs. He was in a position, moreover, favorable to such pretensions. The victories of his great general, the hero Belisarius, had brought the West again under the Greek sway, and Roman popery was forced to yield to that of Constantinople.

*An Imperial Pope.*

It was one of the worst fruits of the polemical spirit of the day, that the desire to root out error was greatly in excess of sober zeal for the Truth: a definition of the Faith was apt to be held in honor, in proportion to the anathemas that followed in its train. Justinian opened a new field for the exercise of this spirit,[7] by turning men's attention to the errors of the dead. Collecting certain opinions imputed to Origen, he anathematized them by an edict, and induced the Roman and Eastern Patriarchs to concur in his decree. This opened the way for a step of much greater moment.

*Tenets of Origen condemned.*

A chief obstacle, it was thought, to unity among the Easterns, lay in the fact that Chalcedon had shown too great a tenderness to the friends of Nestorius. There were three things especially which had not been condemned: *the Letter of Theodoret against Cyril's anathemas; the calumnious Letter of Ibas to Maris the Persian; the rationalistic works of Theodorus of Mopsuestia.* The Emperor was wrought upon to do with these as he had done with the tenets of Origen. The four Patriarchs of the East reluctantly concurred. The West was more refractory: for it was suspected that the condemna-

*The Three Chapters.*

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[6] See Gibbon's noble chapter on this subject, ch. xliv.

[7] Evag. iv. 38.

tion of the "Three Chapters," as they were called, was a covert attack upon the credit of Chalcedon. An African Synod refused outright "to anathematize the dead." Vigilius of Rome was at first equally decided. But coming to Constantinople, in obedience to an order from the Emperor, he was partly forced, partly wheedled, into a more complaisant frame of mind. After many vacillations, he anathematized the Three Chapters, putting in a *salvo* for the honor of Chalcedon, and asked for a General Council, that the act might be approved.

*Pope Vigilius.*

The Bishops were brought together to the number of one hundred and sixty-five, among whom were five Africans, the only prelates from the West.[8] Vigilius was ill at ease, and on the plea of sickness declined to be present. Every breeze that came from the West bore to his ears the rumors of rebellion. After the fourth "conference," or session, the Council having reached and anathematized the writings of Theodorus, he attempted to interpose with a "Constitutum," condemning certain opinions without mentioning names, and forbidding the Bishops to discuss the question further. The document, it is probable, never reached the Council. The Bishops, at all events, paid no attention to it, but condemned the Three Chapters: inasmuch, however, as Theodoret and Ibas had repented of their error and had been absolved at Chalcedon, their persons were excepted from the sentence passed upon their opinions. Vigilius, a few months later, allowed his scruples to give way to Imperial persuasion, ascribing his previous obstinacy to the instigation of the devil.

*Fifth General Council, A.D. 553.*

*The Three Chapters condemned.*

Little good resulted, so far as the East was concerned. The Monophysites were not appeased. The Origenians, a name that still applied to some of the monks of Palestine, were deeply aggrieved: for the Council had either expressly, or implicitly, anathematized their tenets. In the West,

*Effect of the Council.*

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[8] Mansi, ix.; Hardouin, iii.

there were hot disputes and formidable schisms. Milan and Ravenna separated from Rome: Aquileia and the Istrian Bishops refused to be reconciled for about a century and a half.

*Schisms in the West.*

Justinian became a convert, in his old age, to the heresy of the Incorrupticolæ;[9] and putting forth an edict, prepared to persecute in their behalf. Anastasius, the Antiochean Patriarch, made ready for resistance. The crisis was averted by the sudden death of the Imperial heresiarch. His successors, the well-meaning but weak Justin, the able and virtuous Tiberius, the unfortunate Maurice,[10] were too much absorbed in secular troubles to meddle much with theology. The same was true of Phocas, the monster and usurper. Heraclius, in six victorious campaigns worthy of the best days of Rome, broke the power of Chosroes the Persian, and crowned his triumphs by the redemption of innumerable captives and by the restoration of the Wood of the true Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. But the effort had drained the resources of the Empire and the manly virtues of the Emperor. Persia, the rival kingdom, was equally exhausted. The conflict of ages between Greek and Persian power, a conflict which Rome had inherited and stubbornly continued, ended by leaving both a prey to a new and strange foe. For it was in the latter days of Heraclius that the "little horn" appeared in a corner of his dominions, which was destined ere long to threaten the whole world. "While the Emperor triumphed[11] at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief: an ordinary and trifling

*Justinian a Heretic.*

*His Successors, A.D. 565-610.*

*Heraclius, A.D. 610-641.*

*First Inroads of the Saracens.*

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[9] Evag. iv. 39–41.

[10] In the reign of Maurice, Evagrius finished his History, bringing it down to the year 594. The inflated style of this production, and its excessive fondness for the marvellous, are counterbalanced by the honesty and piety apparent in every page.

[11] Gibbon, end of chap. xlvi.

occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the apostles of Mohammed: their fanatic valor had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his reign, Heraclius lost to the Arabs the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians."

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## CHAPTER VI.

### MONOTHELITE HERESY AND THE SIXTH GENERAL COUNCIL.

*Doctrine of the One Will.*

THE danger from this quarter did not prevent the Emperor from engaging in one more attempt to stay the tottering ark of religion. The end of his reign witnessed a new effort to conciliate heresy, and consequently a new heresy to be condemned. By the advice of the Patriarch Sergius, he put forth an edict affirming the existence of but *one Will in Christ.*

*Nature of the Heresy.*

It was the last link of a long chain of efforts, beginning with Apollinaris, or rather with the Docetæ, to find something in which the Manhood assumed by our Lord might differ in nature from the Humanity inherited from Adam. Sin only excepted, He was made in all things like unto us. But "sin" might be thought identical with the sinful *will* in man; and the "sinful will" might easily be confounded with the *human* will. To deny "sin," therefore, in Christ, seemed to carry with it a denial of the "human will" in Christ. Furthermore, it was argued, the will pertains to man's personality rather than to his nature.[1] When our Lord, therefore, assumed man's nature, He did not take his will. The will of the Word acted in and through the two Natures, by what was called a *theandric* operation.

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[1] For subtle discussions of this subject see documents in Mansi *Concilia*, Sixth Gen. Council.

*Four Patriarchs deceived.*

It was a theological trap ingeniously contrived; and, baited as it was with the hope of conciliation, most of the Easterns greedily fell into it. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria were among the number. The latter of these, Cyrus, was enabled on the strength of it to reconcile to the Church one of the Monophysite sects. But Sophronius, a monk, afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem, saw the danger and sounded the alarm. He showed that to deny the human will in Christ, or to deny even the natural *operation* of that will, was to detract from His perfect Humanity and to bring in the error of Apollinaris under another form. The tide of opinion soon began to turn. Sergius found it necessary to look for a new ally, and wrote, on the subject, to Honorius of Rome. Honorius answered by a letter, in which he committed himself to the heresy, deprecating, however, all further discussion. But the Church by this time was thoroughly aroused. Men stood forth on every side to impugn the new dogma. Some who at first had readily received it showed themselves eager to retrace their steps.

*Sophronius sounds an Alarm.*

*Honorius of Rome.*

*The Ecthesis, A.D. 639.*

Within nine years after the issuing of his first edict, Heraclius found it necessary to modify his decree. He put forth the Ecthesis, so called, declaring the *twofold operation* to be an open question. But by this time the orthodox instinct of old Rome was once more awakened. Pope John IV. rejected the Ecthesis, and girded himself for battle.

*The Typus, A.D. 648.*

Nine years later still, Constans II. framed a new edict called the Typus, prohibiting controversy. He might as well have forbidden the winds to blow. Theodore of Rome breaks off communion with Constantinople; and, somewhat later, Martin I., in a Roman Synod, condemns the Ecthesis and Typus, and boldly anathematizes the Monothelite leaders. This was more than Constans could bear. Pope Martin was seized by the order of the Emperor; brought to Constantinople; thrown into a dungeon; convicted, through hired witnesses, of treason and conspiracy; and finally, after innumerable insults, was banished to the Chersonesus, where he died. Others of the orthodox leaders were treated still more outrageously. They were scourged, deprived of their tongues and their right hands, conducted in mockery through the streets, and ignominiously hurried into exile.

*Cruel Treatment of Pope Martin.*

While controversy thus raged, the Saracens were wresting from the Emperors the fairest provinces of their dominions: or rather, it required little wresting; for tyranny and corruption had long since done their work, and the tree was no sooner touched than the rotten fruit fell. Jerusalem, under the Patriarch Sophronius, maintained its old character for obstinate resistance:[2] but after a siege of four months, in which not a day passed without fighting, it was forced to submit to a yoke heavier than it had ever borne before. Under the same yoke it has continued ever since; with the exception of eighty-eight years of Latin occupation during the Crusades. Damascus had fallen four years before Jerusalem: Tyre, Cæsarea, and numberless other places submitted within a few years after. By the middle of the century, Alexandria and Egypt, with the isle of Cyprus, passed under the yoke of Islam. The Empire, in fact, was threatened in every part, and had little to oppose to the invader, save the passive resistance of mere weight and bulk. Constantinople, however, was saved by the strength of its walls, by the courage of despair, and by the timely invention of the terrible Greek fire.[3] The conquerors were not only checked for awhile, but were forced to do homage for their possessions in Syria and Egypt, by the payment of a nominal tribute.

*Saracen Conquests.*

*Jerusalem taken.* A.D. 637

*Alexandria,* A.D. 647.

*Constantinople saved,* A.D. 677.

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[2] Ockley's *History of the Saracens;* Gibbon, chap. li. lii.

[3] The *timeliness* of those discoveries and inventions which have placed Christian civilization so far in advance of all others, might form the title of an interesting chapter in the Providential History of the World.

Constantine Pogonatus, under whom this last event happened, was orthodox in his views, and the Patriarchs by whom he was guided had begun to grow weary of a bootless controversy. A sixth General Council was duly convened. Among the higher prelates, Macarius of Antioch alone stood up for the now disreputable doctrine of the One Will in Christ. He was assisted by a monk named Polycronius, who offered to raise a dead man to life, in proof of the dogma. The Council accepted his offer, and a corpse was brought in. The monk failed in his experiment, but was not convinced of his error. The Synod deposed Macarius, excommunicated the monk, and anathematized the names of Sergius, Pope Honorius,[4] and other Monothelite leaders. Finally the Bishops, to the number of one hundred and sixty, signed a declaration that "in Christ there are two natural Wills, and two Operations, without division, change, confusion: that the human Will does not conflict with the Divine, but follows it, and in all things is subjected to it."

*Sixth General Council,* A.D. 680.

*Two Wills, Two Operations.*

About ten years later, under the reign of Justinian II., a larger assembly, held *in Trullo,* in the *domed* chapel of the Palace, and hence known as the Trullan (or, as it is otherwise called, the Quinisext) Council, confirmed the decrees of the six Ecumenical Synods, and put forth one hundred and eleven canons, including eighty-five attributed to the Apostles. These became law in

*The Trullan or Quinisext Council,* A.D 691.

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[4] Pope Honorius has been excused on every possible ground: so far, however, as the question of *infallibility* is concerned, no argument can shake the *fact* that the Sixth Council believed a Pope *might err* in matters of faith, and that one Pope at least had so erred. It is equally certain that some of the successors of Honorius took the same view as the Council. For an ample discussion of the subject, see Forbesii, *Instruct. Historicæ-Theolog.* lib. v; Pagi, *Breviarium PP. Rom. S. Agatho. Pontif.;* Natalis Alexandr. *Sæc. Septim. Dissert.* ii. [See also the copious literature that has sprung out of the so-called Œcumenical Council at Rome, which in 1870 professed to define the Personal Infallibility of the Pope. See also *Appendix.*—EDITOR.]

the Eastern Church. In the West, Pope Sergius III. refused to sign them, and the growing estrangement between Rome and Constantinople was thereby increased.

*The Maronites.*

Not long after, an attempt was made to revive the Monothelite heresy, and the Emperor Philippicus induced a servile Synod to condemn the Sixth Council. But it proved a little cloud which soon passed over. The error lingered for some centuries among the inhabitants of Libanus, an offshoot from the old Phœnician stock, who in the beginning of the eighth century were elevated to civil and religious independence by their Patriarch John Maron, and successfully resisted the Moslem yoke. In the twelfth century they submitted to the See of Rome.

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*The Work accomplished by the Age of the General Councils.*

*The Faith kept.*

Thus ends a long war of four centuries, a continuous battle for the Faith, in which the Greek and Latin and Oriental mind, excited to an almost preternatural heat, had assailed, and defended, every imaginable point at which the Creed could be attacked, and with every kind of weapon that human passion or human subtlety could supply. If we look at the mere details of the strife, faith is shocked by the weakness, waywardness, and wickedness of religious men. If we look at the result, the Creed stands out before us, with a solidity, symmetry and consistency which, but for the long war against it, could hardly have been appreciated, but which, in the sequel of the history of Christendom, at least in its more living parts, has been universally acknowledged. With such a work accomplished, it is idle to criticise the way in which the work was done. The saints of the period of the six General Councils were called to *labor* for the Faith: we have entered into the fruit of their labors. Where they were obliged to "contend earnestly," we have little else to do than to receive and enjoy. It can be put down to their credit, and it is the utmost that can be said of the men of any period, that having fought a good fight and finished their course, *they kept the Faith.* The defects that a critic[5] may discern in their manner of fighting or of working, may serve indeed as a warning, to deter us from similar errors, but are more useful still as an encouragement; showing, as they do, that the work of God is not defeated by human weakness, but that age after age, and period after period, accomplishes its appointed task: that however much of the cheaper material, the wood, hay, stubble, may perish in a Divine purgation, yet something true and costly, costly of sweat and toil and treasure and blood, will always be found to remain, the contribution which each age makes to the work of, perhaps, countless ages.

[5] The sneers of Gibbon and the half-sneers of his Christian imitators, in reference to the history of controversy, amount simply to this: that, in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, there was a *vast* expenditure of human blood and brain. But we may ask, looking at the question from a merely worldly point of view, how could blood and brain have been spent to better purpose? Gibbon replies, in substance, that they might have been devoted to the defence of *the Empire* against the outside Barbarians. The monks might have been turned into soldiers, the priests into politicians and sophists, or, perhaps, mandarins. In short, the Western world, like the Eastern, might have had its China. We may well doubt whether the world in general would have been benefited by the exchange. [It is their glory that with all their might they fought for the Faith. The *mode* of their warfare was naturally that which was readily supplied by the civilization of the age in which they lived. Our higher civilization has made us so refined that we hardly care to fight for the Faith at all. Moreover, the building of the outer walls is far rougher work than the internal finish of the palace chambers.—EDITOR.]

# Appendix.

[The following brief summary of the leading facts in the case of Pope Honorius is taken from a fragment in Dr. Mahan's handwriting, supplemented by the Editor from the learned and able pamphlet of P. Le Page Renouf on *The Condemnation of Pope Honorius* (London, Longmans, 1868), and other sources.]

The Emperor Heraclius, hoping to reconcile the Monophysites, came to an understanding with their leaders to accept a compromise which asserted the doctrine of only *one* Divine-human energy (*ἐνέργεια*) or *operation*, and of *one will* in Christ.

Sophronius, an acute monk of Palestine, afterwards Patriarch of Jerusalem, asserted on the contrary, *two wills* and *two operations* of Christ,—the Divine and the human. He refers the case to Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople.

Sergius refuses to assert one will, or two wills; or one operation or two operations; but affirms that the one Jesus Christ *ἐνεργεῖν τὰ τε Θεῖα καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα.* He objects also to two operations, as *δύο θελήματα ἐναντίως πρὸς ἀλλήλα ἔχοντα*, etc. Sergius writes his view of the case fully, in a "dogmatic epistle," to Honorius of Rome, asking his judgment in the matter.

Honorius, having received the letters both of Sophronius and Sergius, replies, fully approving the doctrinal statements of Sergius, and confirming his arguments by many more of the same kind. He decides authoritatively, "for the instruction and knowledge of those who are in perplexity," that the two-fold operation is a "scandal," a "new invention," and that Sophronius "should not persist in preaching the formula of *two operations;*" affirming moreover that he makes "one Confession," and agrees "in one spirit, with a like teaching of the Faith," with Sergius.

The doctrine of Sophronius was, from the first, carefully guarded against the misconstructions under cover of which attempts have been made to excuse Honorius. He affirmed that one Christ, abiding inseparably and *inconfusé* in two Natures, performed truly and wisely, and without stain of sin, everything that belongs to our human nature. These assertions were against the errors, *First*, that what he suffered in the flesh, he suffered *involuntarily*, under *compulsion*, in *bonds*, etc.; *Secondly*, that the Divine Nature in any way overpowered or anticipated the human, *not allowing it time to act; Thirdly*, that the Incarnation should be made to appear merely *nominal.* Sophronius also explicitly asserted the One Person of Christ, etc.

In the Sixth General Council there were publicly read, and critically examined, copies of the Synodical Epistles of Sophronius, and of the "Dogmatic Epistles" of Sergius and Honorius; and before being acted on, these copies were carefully compared with the originals, in the Chartophylacium at Constantinople, and were found to be correct. Finally, the doctrines of both Sergius and Honorius were condemned, rejected, and anathematized, as heretical; and they, with several others, were anathematized by name. The doctrine of Sophronius was at the same time approved as agreeing with the true Faith, and with the doctrine of the Apostles and Fathers,—orthodox and salutary to the Holy Catholic Church; and his name was inserted in the *diptychs.* (N. B.—At the end of *Actio* XIII., the Council expressly declares, that Sergius and Honorius are condemned, not only on information given concerning them, but after diligently comparing the writings of them both.)

The Council was not content with anathematizing Sergius and Honorius *once.* They repeated the anathema a *second* time in *Actio* XVIII., in the Synodical Definition; a *third* time, in the same *Actio*, in the *Exclamatio* to the Emperor; a *fourth* time, in the prophonetic or acclamatory *sermon* to the same; a *fifth* time, in the Synodal Letter to Pope Agatho of Rome: and in each of these five acts, the Papal legates took part, and signed their names. A *sixth* repetition occurs in the Edict of the Emperor, embodying the action of the Council. Pope Leo II. then took up the work of anathematizing his predecessor as a heretic. He first of all acknowledges the receipt of the "Acts" of the Council, and adds that he concurs in the anathema against Honorius by name, "who, instead of laboring to keep the Apostolic Church pure by the teaching of Apostolic tradition, suffered it, the immaculate, to be polluted through his profane betrayal." In his letter to the Spanish Count Simplicius, again and yet again in his letters to the Spanish Bishops, and in another letter to the Spanish king Ervigius, the same anathema for heresy is reiterated against Honorius. In the life of Leo II. by Anastasius the Librarian, the same fact is repeated once more. The anathema was further repeated by the Quinisext Council; then again by the Second Council of Nice, and also by that which Rome acknowledges as the Eighth General Council,—this last being the most significant, since, as Mr. Renouf says, "its proceedings were entirely carried on under Roman influence," whereas the sixtn and seventh General Councils were Oriental. Nor was this all. The anathema of Honorius as a heretic was repeated, for ages, by every successor of Leo II. in the See of Rome, at his accession; and it was incorporated into the Breviary, so that the condemnation of Honorius for the Monothelite heresy was repeated annually for a thousand years by every priest and prelate who made faithful use of his Breviary. It would really seem as if there never had been, since the world began, a more notoriously or more thoroughly anathematized heretic than Pope Honorius of Rome.

Against all this, the advocates of Honorius either deny the fact of his condemnation for heresy, or else they dispute the equity of it.

As to the fact, the apologists of Pope Honorius, says Renouf, "constantly hesitate between solutions which are *asserted* to be indisputable, but which are nevertheless *subversive of each other.* Honorius, it is said, was unjustly condemned; he was not condemned; he could not have been condemned, and all the documents, Greek and Latin, acts of Councils and Pope's letters, asserting the condemnation, are forgeries; he was condemned only as a private Doctor. The heretical letters ascribed to him were forged by the Monothelites, to countenance their heresy; they were forged by orthodox Greeks to bring disgrace upon a Pope; his letters are perfectly orthodox. Some of these solutions are out of date; other solutions, quite as irreconcilable with facts, are still flourishing." As to "forgeries," Mr. Renouf says: "It is idle to waste words on this part of the subject. No one now doubts the genuineness of any of the documents bearing upon the question. . . . . . However plausible such assertions may have been in former days, they are now destitute of interest, and none but grossly ignorant persons could have recourse to them." Perrone says that there is no room for even a slight suspicion of either adulteration or forgery.

The attempts to explain away the indisputable condemnation are equally unhappy.

1. Turrecremata held that in this matter both Popes and Councils had fallen into error in dogmatic *fact.* Bellarmine attributes to the Council "intolerable error and impudence." Baronius says that "nothing could be imagined more wicked, more impudent, or more foolish," than their conduct. "This is respectful language," says Renouf, "to use about an Ecumenical Council approved by the Pope;" or rather, *three* Ecumenical Councils approved by a *long line of Popes.*

2. De Maistre's idea that the condemnation of a Pope was a piece of Greek impudence is not new; but how explain the consent of the Papal legates, and Pope Leo's confirmation of the Council and his promulgation of its acts?

3. As to the justice of the condemnation, he was condemned *for heresy.* "It is a simple untruth to say that he was condemned for neglect, criminal remissness, and tolerating heretics instead of excommunicating them. It is as a heretic that he was anathematized over and over again." His first letter was condemned as proving that "he followed the mind of Sergius in all

things." His "second letter was ordered to be burnt as impious and soul-destroying. . . . . . The Monothelites appealed to the authority of Honorius, as one who agreed with them,—the Council no less decidedly declares that Honorius agreed with them, and anathematizes him on this account."

4. The question as to whether he was condemned as a private Doctor or as a Pope is of more interest to Romish theologians than to us; and we refer all who would examine it further to Renouf, a singularly learned and candid Roman Catholic himself, who declares it to be "a mockery to consider the Pope's solemn, public, and most earnest reply to the Eastern Patriarchs otherwise than as *ex cathedra*." The question is also treated with great learning and spirit in *Janus*, and by Bishop Maret, and many of the other brilliant and powerful writers who have been called into activity by the Vatican Council of 1870.

See also Scene II. of the *Comedy of Canonization* in Vol. III. of Dr. Mahan's Works, among his *Miscellaneous Writings*.

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